VISIONING the HARDY DOWNTOWN CONNECTOR

FINAL CONCEPTUAL VISION STUDY



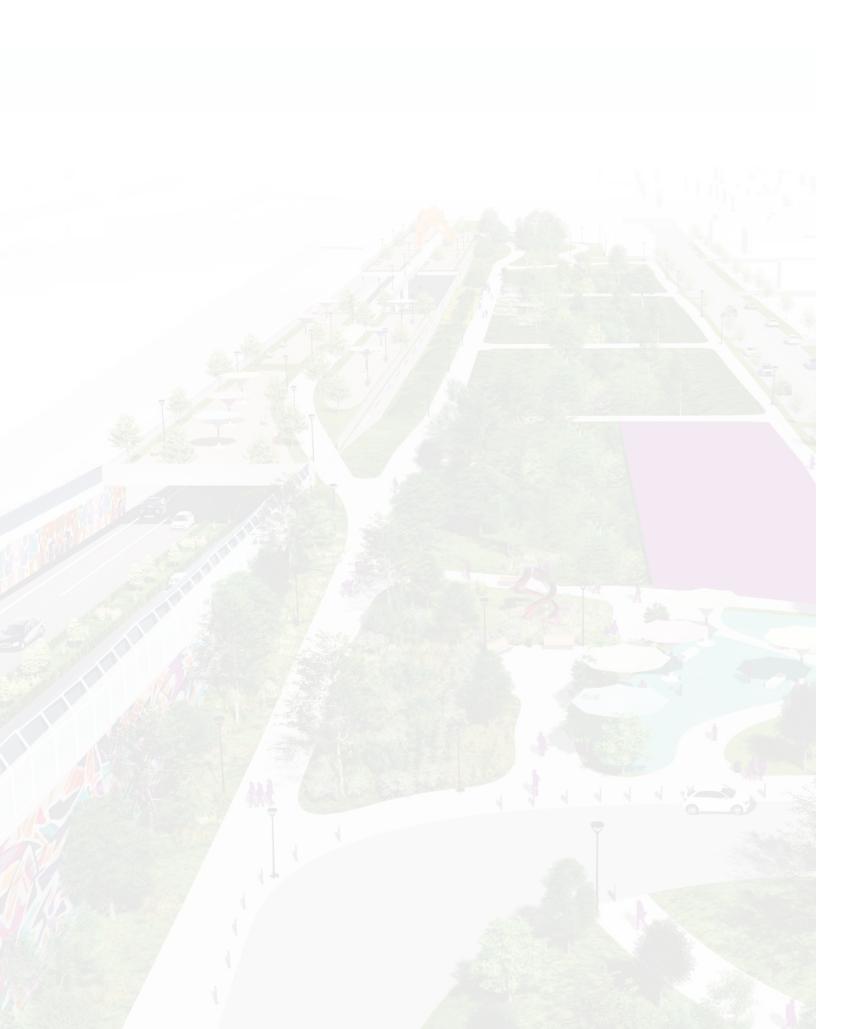


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VISION STUDY SUMMARY



ABOUT THE VISION

PROJECT VISION

Visioning The Hardy Downtown Connector explores the modern alternative to new infrastructure in Houston. This plan transforms traditional challenges such as the creation of physical barriers, noise and air pollutants, and stormwater detention, into opportunities.

Visioning The Hardy Downtown Connector reimagines the corridor as a landscaped parkway. Building on public engagement throughout the process, the corridor integrates transit, pedestrian paths, bikeways, parks, and other community benefits. This Vision gives the Hardy Downtown Connector the potential to act as a transformational project that enhances mobility, improves quality of life, and promotes investment to strengthen and connect surrounding communities.

A VISION DRIVEN BY COMMUNITY INPUT:

Public engagement took place throughout the entirety of the VISIONING process for the Hardy Downtown Connector Project. HCTRA conducted an extensive public engagement campaign to solicit the community's input on a VISION for the project. HCTRA engaged 100% of community groups that included Elected Officials, Management Districts, TIRZ, Chamber, Super Neighborhoods, Neighborhood Associations, Civic Clubs, Bike clubs, Residents, Businesses, Churches, Schools, and other community groups. The input provided from all the community groups was vital in shaping the VISION for the Hardy Downtown Connector Project.

HCTRA used multiple strategic communication methods to engage with the diverse community. HCTRA met with over 60 key stakeholders and presented project updates at over 40 community meetings/events between November 2022 to October 2023. The other types of communication methods used to reach the various communities included emailing, delivering 25,000 door hangers, 22,000 direct mail pieces, flyer distribution at community facilities, online ads (English &



Spanish) in the Chronicle newspaper, social media, yard signs, community/neighborhood newsletters and more.

HCTRA hosted 2 Community Workshops in 2023. Both workshops were held in the evening at Sherman Elementary School. Both workshops were an interactive open house type format where the attendees could provide input on the concept exhibits and the roadway alignment map that were presented at both events. Over 2,500 points of feedback and 460 written comments were received at the workshops.

Approximately 200 people attended the first workshop and over 250 attendees participated at the second workshop. All the handouts, roadway alignment map, and exhibit boards were in English and Spanish.

A VISION DRIVEN BY OPPORTUNITIES:

While traditional highway design starts with a primary focus on vehicles, this visioning process started from a site and community level understanding. The conceptual design approach for this project prioritizes community benefits, or, the overall opportunities associated with the proposed corridor including social, environmental and recreational.



A VISION CENTERED AROUND 4 KEY THEMES:









Neighborhood Connections

In addition to HCTRA's improvements to Collingsworth and Lorraine, and upcoming improvements to Quitman, providing grade separated crossings at the existing railroad tracks, the proposed vision balances pedestrian and bike access along the corridor by enhancing street crossings, overall pedestrian/bicycle safety, and transit improvements that will improve the human experience and comfort. HCTRA has also committed improvement to Hardy and Elysian streets, a trail along the corridor, and partnering with local entities for improvements along the corridor.

Vibrant Placemaking

Create a unique identity for the corridor through vibrant gateways, signage, and branding. This includes engaging public art, neighborhood/community branding and integration of nature themed murals that tell a story of cultural, social, and ecological history and the voices of the neighborhood.

Public Space Activation

The future corridor will create opportunities to activate currently underutilized parcels of land along the linear corridor. Public space activation creates new community resources such as parks and parklets to provide social, environmental, and recreational opportunities for the surrounding neighborhoods.

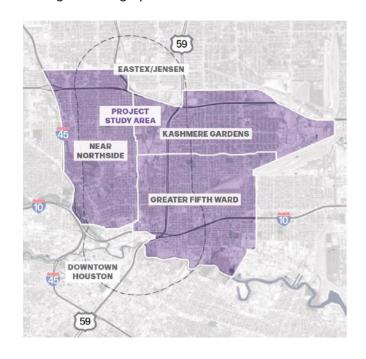
Regenerative Ecology

Going beyond drainage, air quality, and noise mitigation; by improving urban ecology, sustainability, and the social and environmental resilience along the corridor.

SUMMARY OF STUDY AREA

Understanding the existing conditions and infrastructure around the proposed Hardy Downtown Connector was paramount in setting a parameter for the visioning process. The study area analysis included the neighborhoods of Near Northside, Kashmere Gardens, and Fifth Ward. There were also some reviews of Downtown Houston and Eastex/Jensen as well. The methodology of study area analysis included reviewing existing plans and studies that have been previously performed in the aforementioned areas. Collection, review, and analysis of demographic, land use, transportation, and other data sets were also incorporated into this analysis to provide a comprehensive picture of the area.

Another key component to the analysis was to understand the environmental context of the site, and to identify potential areas of impact. Due to its location being adjacent to the existing railroad tracks, as well as the area's industrial history, there are environmental implications and conditions that need to be carefully considered during the design process.



CONCEPTUAL DESIGN OF THE VISION

THE ROADWAY CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

The roadway conceptual design was shaped around community input and the roadways interaction with the 5 community benefit sites. Similarly, noise and air quality concerns have remained a focus of the conceptual design. Two main strategies include a "cut and cover" roadway section where feasible, and strategic placement of an elevated portion of the roadway that includes sound barriers. Planting strategies along the area will additionally mitigate air quality conditions.

CUT AND COVER ROADWAY

The cut and cover section of the roadway was envisioned to maximize the available space for community benefit sites. The covered section of the roadway offers the opportunity for a linear park that will redefine green space. Additional benefits of the cut and cover includes noise and air quality mitigation in the community benefit areas as well as the elevation change (hills) provide special walk and biking experiences. The cut and cover is not a continuous tunnel, but a strategic cover of benefit areas, while allowing passive ventilation in other areas.

ELEVATED ROADWAY

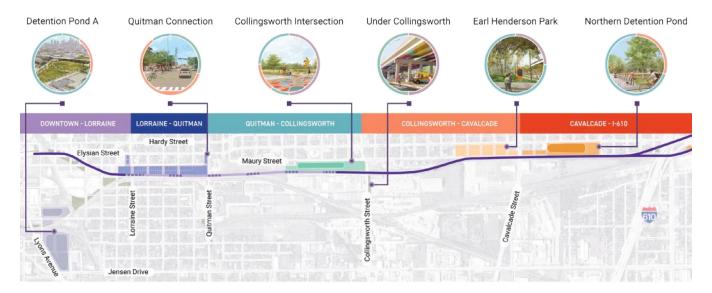
The elevated portion of the roadway allows minimal disruption between the community benefit sites and the roadway. The use of sound barriers will limit noise in community benefit areas and the community along the project. The area below the elevated roadway will be used for planting, detention, and parking to compliment the community benefit area.











CONCEPTUAL DESIGN PROCESS

Following input from the community workshop, the team has distilled key themes and identified specific community needs that must be addressed in the design of roadways and open spaces.

The central objectives during the conceptual design phase include:

- Minimizing the impact of the roadway in terms of sound, visual aesthetics, and connectivity.
- Maximizing the use of available land to create more appealing spaces and implement community-centric programs.
- Establishing stronger connections between neighborhoods and the downtown area.
- Enhancing environmental performance through thoughtful design considerations.

These objectives were further pursued through a series of conceptual design development meetings.



VISION FOR DOWNTOWN - LORRAINE



VISION FOR LORRAINE - QUITMAN



VISION FOR QUITMAN - COLLINGSWORTH



VISION FOR COLLINGSWORTH - CAVALCADE



VISION FOR CAVALCADE - NORTH I-610

KEY THEMES OF THE VISION







KEY THEMES THROUGH DESIGN

Final concepts included a more detailed and realistic look at 5 locations throughout the project site. These areas are further identified through their key intersections. The conceptual design highlights how all 4 key themes can be incorporated into every site.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

In an effort to minimize the roadway's impact on neighborhood connections, the team explored diverse approaches to enhance connectivity. This involved devising a comprehensive multi-use path extending from I-610 to Downtown, proposing innovative designs for new neighborhood roadways like Maury, Hardy and Elysian, and introducing pedestrian/bike bridges over key intersections. Additionally, the conceptual design considered various options for railway crossings, presenting unique opportunities for placemaking.



VIBRANT PLACEMAKING

Public space activation transforms spaces from passive areas into dynamic and inclusive environments that contribute positively to the community. Activation involves creating an engaging and vibrant atmosphere within these spaces to encourage community interaction, recreation, and a sense of place. The potential within the corridor is found at key intersections and sites benefiting the community. The conceptual design strategy involves incorporating murals, artistic crosswalks, sculptures, and gateways.



PUBLIC SPACE ACTIVATION

Capitalizing on five HCTRA-owned sites, the conceptual design formulates site plans that enhance neighborhood connections and facilitate diverse programming. The range of programs spans from passive to active uses, fostering increased neighborhood engagement. Detention areas on four sites are retained, and for those with proposed decks and hard surfaces, bioswales beneath the roadway should be designed to ensure compliance with City of Houston requirements for overall detention areas. Strategic partnerships will be necessary to bring programming on these sites to life. The community should be highly involved in making and managing these partnerships between HCTRA and other public and community groups.



Regenerative ecology is an approach to environmental and ecological management that seeks to restore, renew, and revitalize ecosystems. It goes beyond traditional conservation or sustainable practices by actively enhancing and promoting the health and resilience of ecosystems. The conceptual design prioritizes addressing environmental concerns, encompassing stormwater management, noise reduction, and air quality improvements. Strategies include implementing sound barriers along the roadway to mitigate noise levels, incorporating green columns for air filtration, and structuring the roadway to filter and store stormwater effectively.



Over 8 Acres

Stormwater Detention

Approximately 45 Acre-Feet (1 Acre-Feet is the volume of stormwater that would cover one acre to a depth of one foot.)

Tree Canopy

Over 3,200 Proposed New Trees

Vertical Green Columns

Over 8,000 Square-Feet





Noise Barrier

Over 1.5 Miles

Annual Energy Generation

Over 350,000 Kwh (From proposed solar panels)

Annual Rate Of Carbon Sequestration

Over 490,000 Lbs. (Total amount of carbon dioxide captured from the atmosphere and stored in the trunk, roots, and canopy of the proposed trees each year.)

* All quantities are approximate and based on calculations and the conceptual design.



STUDY OVERVIEW



WHAT IF A NEW ROADWAY...

REJUVENATED COMMUNITIES?

ENHANCED LIVABILITY?

RECONNECTED NEIGHBORHOODS?

HAD ECOLOGICAL BENEFITS?

GAVE NEW OPPORTUNITIES?

IMPROVED AIR QUALITY?

REMEDITATED POLLUTANTS?

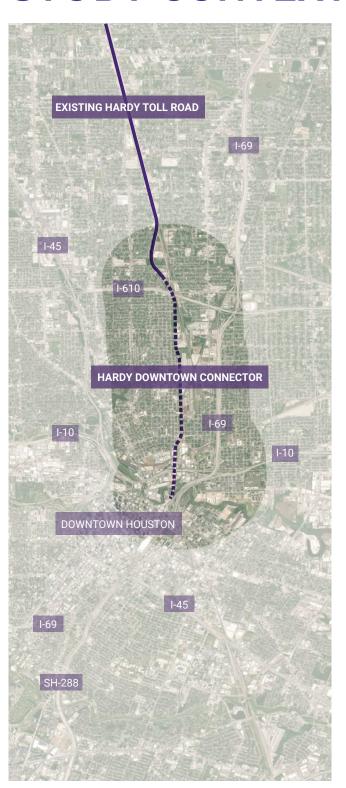
PROVIDED PUBLIC SPACE?

WAS A COMMUNITY RESOURCE?

SUPPORTED EXISTING CULTURE?

FOSTERED INCLUSIVITY?

STUDY CONTEXT



The Visioning The Hardy Downtown Connector Study explores the modern alternative to new roadway construction in Houston. This plan trades traditional challenges such as disintegration of the urban fabric, noise, air pollutants, and water detention, into opportunities.

This visioning study is the continuation of over 3 decades of coordination on the larger Hardy Downtown Connector Project. The plans for the original Hardy Toll Road (1988) included an extension into downtown Houston. In 1999, The Hardy Downtown Connector project was kicked off. The project began with discussions and coordination with the many project stakeholders.

The Hardy Downtown Connector, located between the Near Northside, Kashmere Gardens, and Fifth Ward communities. It is an extension of the existing Hardy Toll Road which is currently 21.6 miles long, beginning at I-610 North between I-45 North and I-69/US-59 North and travels northward parallel to I-45 until the two roadways eventually merge. The Hardy Downtown Connector will provide a 25-mile link for multiple destinations from northern Harris County to downtown Houston.

The **visioning study** has emerged to respond to the many challenges seen in the Hardy Downtown Connector project, mainly the proximity to neighborhoods and existing environmental concerns. The visioning study ensures the cohesion and integration of the new roadway to its surrounding neighborhoods. It also considers how the community benefits can be accessible to all of the people who live, work, and play in the surrounding neighborhood.

THE VISION FOR THE HARDY DOWNTOWN CONNECTOR IS:



A VISION DRIVEN BY COMMUNITY INPUT:

Community and stakeholder engagement took place throughout the entirety of the study duration, beginning in November 2022. For all engagement activities, diversity in race, experiences, and other factors were key in ensuring that all matters were considered. The input provided from all of the different community groups was vital in shaping the visioning study.



A VISION DRIVEN BY SITE LEVEL INTERVENTIONS:

While traditional roadway design starts with a primary focus on vehicles, this visioning process started from a site and community level understanding. The design approach for this study prioritizes community benefits, or, the overall opportunities associated with the proposed roadway corridor including social, environmental and recreational.

The vision for this corridor is shown through an interconnected string of community benefit sites. Each site marks an important intersection or access point for the surrounding neighborhoods. The vision for each site begins with community needs such as green space, multi-modal connections, and amenities. The design then considers how the new roadway will interact with each of these sites along the corridor.

A VISION DRIVEN BY 4 KEY THEMES:

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

In addition to HCTRA's improvements to Collingsworth and Lorraine, and upcoming improvements to Quitman, providing grade separated crossings at the existing railroad tracks, the proposed vision balances pedestrian and bike access along the corridor by enhancing street crossings, overall pedestrian/bicycle safety, and transit improvements that will improve the human experience and comfort. HCTRA has also committed improvement to Hardy and Elysian streets, a trail along the corridor, and partnering with local entities for improvements along the corridor.

VIBRANT PLACEMAKING

Create a unique identity for the corridor through vibrant gateways, signage, and branding. This includes engaging public art, neighborhood/

community branding and integration of nature themed murals that tell a story of cultural, social, and ecological history and the voices of the neighborhood.

PUBLIC SPACE ACTIVATION

The future corridor will create opportunities to activate currently underutilized parcels of land along the linear corridor. Public space activation creates new community resources such as parks and parklets to provide social, environmental, and recreational opportunities for the surrounding neighborhoods.

REGENERATIVE ECOLOGY

Going beyond drainage, air quality, and noise mitigation; by improving urban ecology, sustainability, and the social and environmental resilience along the corridor.



TIMELINE

Project Timeline

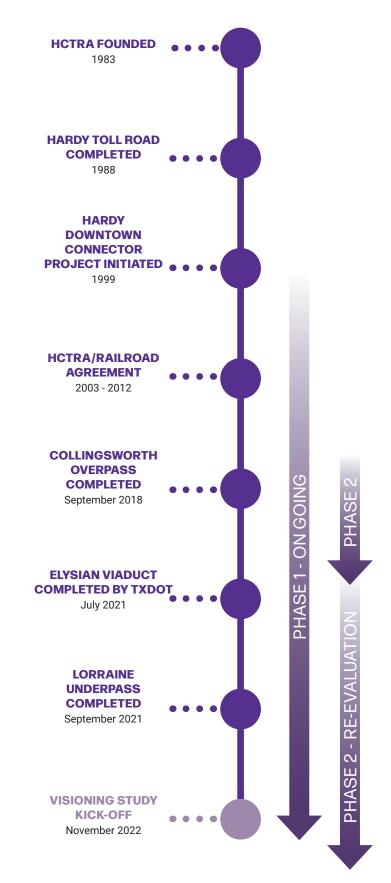
The timeline to the right shows the context to the Hardy Downtown Connector project. Following a Commissioners Court action and the foundation of an agreement between the Harris County Toll Road Authority (HCTRA) and the railroad, Phase 1, of the Downtown Connector project, began with improvements to Collingsworth Overpass and Lorraine Underpass. The visioning study, summarized in this report, re-evaluates and re-imagines Phase 2 of the Hardy Downtown Connector Project. The visioning study began in November of 2022 and examines the relationship between the Hardy Downtown Connector and the larger corridor affected by this project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS:

HARDY DOWNTOWN CONNECTOR PHASE 1
Initiated in 1999, includes construction
of grade separated rail road crossings at
Collingsworth and Lorraine Streets, as well as
upcoming construction of Quitman Street.

HARDY DOWNTOWN CONNECTOR PHASE 2
The extension of the Hardy Toll Road from I-610 to downtown Houston.

VISIONING HARDY DOWNTOWN CONNECTOR
This visioning study kicked off in November 2022, with the goal of re-evaluating previous design plans for the roadway (Phase 2), and re-imagining the project to encompass and incorporate the needs and values of surrounding communities.



Visioning Study Timeline

The Visioning Hardy Downtown Connector Study is an evaluation and reimagining of Phase 2 of the larger Hardy Downtown Connector project. This study began in November of 2022 and is detailed in the graphic on the right.

Purpose of this Study

Visioning a roadway that embodies the larger, surrounding community has been an ongoing and collaborative effort between multiple stakeholders including community members, neighborhood associations, county and city officials, and several related non-profit associations.

The purpose of the visioning study is to develop a conceptual design of the Hardy Toll Road Downtown Connector (Roadway) and the associated corridor. This visioning process validates both the needs and concerns of the community and HCTRA regarding the proposed roadway extension and the implications of its greater impact. The final vision is the result of synthesizing past roadway design concepts, studies, and plans with updated existing conditions, community values, and ecologically oriented technologies that affect the larger corridor.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Throughout this visioning study, there has been ongoing community and stakeholder engagement efforts to receive constant public feedback towards the visioning of the corridor.

Two community workshops were hosted by HCTRA. The first workshop prioritized an understanding of existing conditions and the developing key themes. The second workshop presented "what we heard" from workshop 1 and how feedback was incorporated into the draft visioning concepts.



VISIONING THE HARDY DOWNTOWN CONNECTOR

MARCH 2024

MARCH 2024

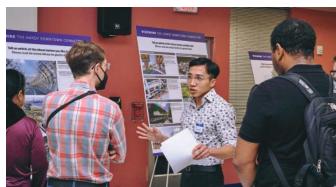
VISIONING THE HARDY DOWNTOWN CONNECTOR

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

Community and stakeholder engagement took place throughout the entirety of the study duration. For all engagement activities, diversity in race, experiences, and other factors were key in ensuring that all matters were considered. The input provided from all of the different groups was vital in shaping the vision of the corridor.

Between November 2022 to October 2023, HCTRA engaged with a total of 60 key stakeholders spanning 30 groups, and attended 40 meetings. A total of approximately 450 meeting attendees between the two public workshops were informed and engaged in the visioning process.











Images from Public Workshop I and II

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The intent of the stakeholder engagement is to work with community members, community leaders and field experts to develop concepts to successfully develop the vision and goals of the corridor. The unique environmental and social context of the corridor location required a full, in-

depth engagement process with the community in order to develop a successful conceptual vision for the roadway and larger corridor.

LIST OF STAKEHOLDER GROUPS INCLUDED

- · Harris County Precinct 1
- Harris County Precinct 2
- Elected Officials and/or staff
 - District H City Council Member Karla Cisneros
 - District B City Council Member Tarsha Jackson
 - HISD Trustee District 1 Elizabeth Santos
 - State Representative Christina Morales
- Super Neighborhood Council Presidents
 - Near Northside #51
 - Kashmere Gardens #52
 - Fifth Ward #55
 - Eastex/Jensen #46
- Management Districts
 - Northside
 - Central Houston
- Northside Hardy TIRZ
- Greater Northside Chamber

- Civic Club/Neighborhood Associations
 - Lindale Park
 - North Lindale
 - Silverdale
 - Ryon
 - Fifth Ward CRC
 - Avenue Park
 - North Central
 - · Historic Near Northside
 - Avenue CDC
- Hardy Community Outreach
- Stop TxDOT I-45
- Trabajadoras del Hogar Sin Fronteras/ Domestic Workers Without Borders
- Greater Northside Partners Coalition Leadership
- University of Houston Downtown, Bike Club
- Air Alliance
- Trees for Houston
- EPA

PUBLIC WORKSHOP I

PUBLIC WORKSHOP I DETAILS:

- Date/Time: Wednesday, March 1st, 2023 6:30pm to 8:30pm
- Location: Sherman Elementary School, 1909 McKee St, Houston, TX 77009
- Attendance: 176 Sign-ins, over 200 estimated attendees

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW:

The first visioning workshop provided an opportunity for community members and the broader public to understand the visioning study and respond to its proposed community benefits. Participants were introduced to the visioning study and guided through its key themes, ideas for possible community benefits, and an overview of the project area.

Approximately 1,699 points of feedback were recorded throughout the event, providing data points for determining public attitudes and preferences regarding the project's proposed community benefits.

Attendees provided a total of 230 comments between three (3) comment activities:

- 64 comment cards
- 104 comment coasters
- 62 comments on various locations within the project map

A combined total of 1,469 votes were recorded between three (3) voting activities

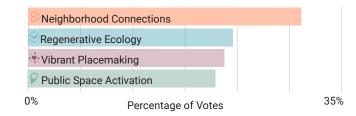
- 724 votes on key themes
- 268 votes on precedent images
- 477 votes on community benefit ideas

KEY FINDINGS:

Attendees selected neighborhood connections as the project's top key theme, receiving approximately one-third of all votes (See graph below).

Out of all key themes, attendees selected the following as the top three elements:

- · Comfort Elements (street trees, lighting, etc.).
- · Noise/Sound Barriers.
- Bike Lanes Addition/Improvements.



COMMON CONCERNS, INTERESTS, AND REQUESTS:

Participants were asked to provide comments throughout the public workshop. A visual summary of common topics addressed in those comments is shown on the following page. The size of the circles represent the number of comments received for that topics, and lines represent links between those topics.

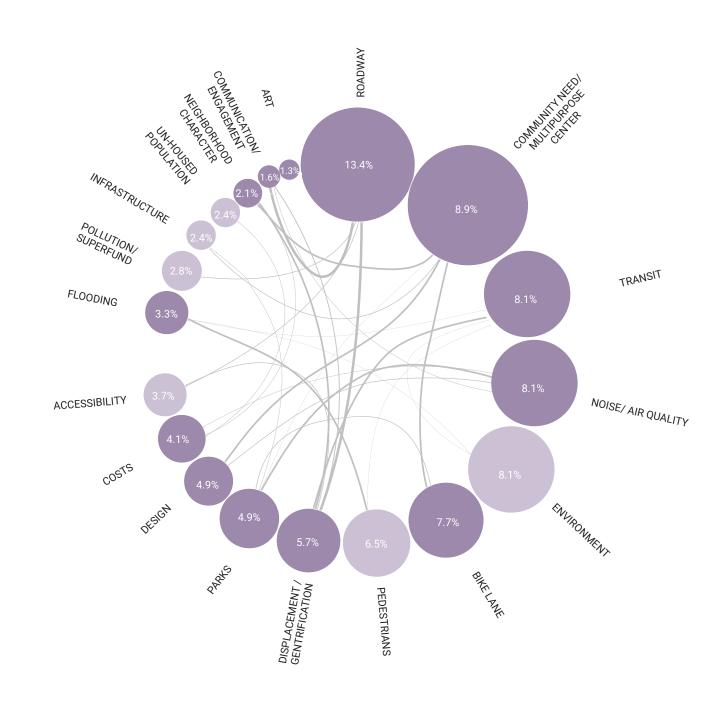
Overall 26% of all comments addressed mobility, which covers comments regarding transit, bike lanes, pedestrians, and accessibility.

Noise and Air quality are major concerns for the community around the proposed connector.

13.4% of comments expressed concern about the roadway itself. Combined with comments expressing concerns of design, costs, and infrastructure, this totaled to 25% of all **comments**. Comments largely expressed desire for clearer information and opportunities for feedback on the larger project.

SUMMARY OF COMMENT TOPICS

VISIONING WORKSHOP I



PUBLIC WORKSHOP II

PUBLIC WORKSHOP DETAILS:

- Date/Time: Wednesday, October 25th, 2023 6:00pm to 8:00pm
- Location: Sherman Elementary School, 1909
 McKee St, Houston, TX 77009
- Attendance: 225 sign-ins, over 250 estimated attendees

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW:

The second visioning workshop was structured as an open-house event with several stations that discussed "what was heard" from the first workshop and how that feedback was incorporated in the conceptual vision for the roadway and the corridor. Opportunities for discussion and collection of feedback was provided at every station.

Approximately **1,074 points of feedback** were recorded throughout the event, providing data points for determining public attitudes and preferences regarding the conceptual corridor design and conceptual roadway design.

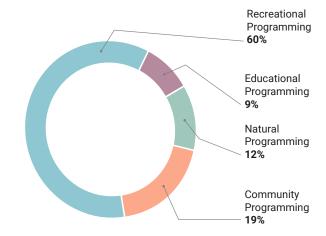
- Attendees turned in or wrote in a total of 239 written comments between eleven (11) comment activities
- A combined total of 835 votes were recorded regarding programming (activities to be provided in the corridor)

PROGRAMMING KEY FINDINGS:

Attendees selected recreational programming as the project's top programming element, receiving 60% of all votes (See pie chart on the right).

Out of 26 programming elements, the following, which all fell under recreational programming elements, were identified as the top three:

- · Basketball 106 votes.
- · Football/Soccer 104 votes.
- · Baseball 99 votes.



Votes on Programming Elements

COMMENTS RECEIVED BY STATION:

11 Stations featured boards with cross sections and conceptual renderings of the roadway, proposed mobility improvements, and opportunities for additional feedback. The top three stations with the most comments were Collingsworth to Cavalcade (65 comments), Comment Stations (37 comments), and the Project Map (25 comments).

COMMON CONCERNS, INTERESTS, AND REQUESTS:

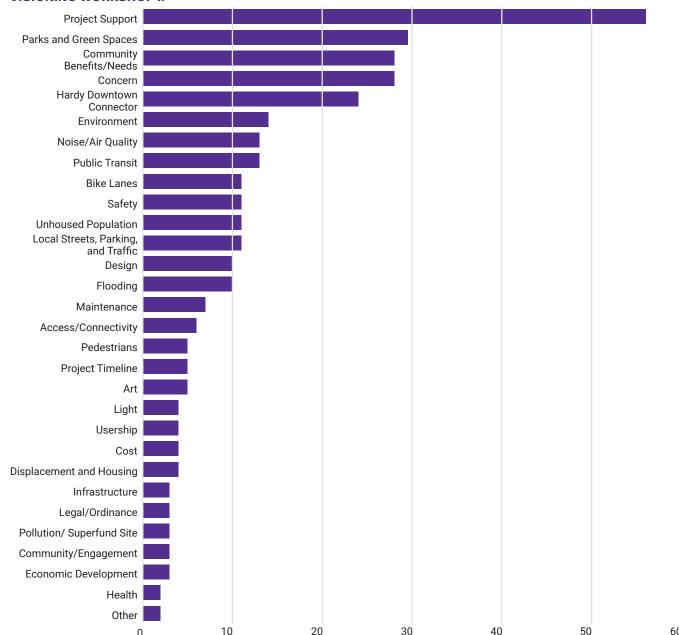
Responses from all stations, including written notes collected from the Project Map were combined together to understand which topics were directly or indirectly expressed by attendees. The visual on the next page shows the combined feedback collected.

Most Common Topic: "Project Support" - 56 comments of 239 total comments

Other topics with high number of comments include Project Opposition (28), Community Benefits and Needs (28), Parks and Green Spaces (26), and comments regarding the Hardy Downtown Connector/the roadway itself (24).

SUMMARY OF COMMENT TOPICS

VISIONING WORKSHOP II



HOW FEEDBACK WAS INCORPORATED:

In the first workshop the discussion focused on developing key themes to guide the project direction. The second workshop included "what we heard" at every discussion station. This summarized how feedback from the first workshop was incorporated in each element of the corridor design vision. Moving forward this visioning study will serve as a comprehensive guide of community input and desired design intent for the roadway and corridor.



STUDY AREA ANALYSIS



STUDY AREA INTRODUCTION

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

Understanding the existing conditions and infrastructure around the proposed corridor was paramount in setting a parameter for the visioning process. The study area analysis consisted of reviewing areas and neighborhoods immediately surrounding the corridor. The study area for this report focuses on the 1-mile radius from the proposed roadway alignment and project area for the corridor.

This study area overlaps with downtown Houston, Near Northside, Greater Fifth Ward, Kashmere Gardens, Eastex/Jensen, and Independence Heights.

The intent of designating vision recommendations beyond the project area is to ensure the cohesion and integration of the corridor to its surrounding neighborhoods. It also considers how the community benefits can be accessible to all of the people who live, work, and play in the surrounding neighborhood.

HCTRA PROPERTIES

Over the past 10 years HCTRA has acquired properties throughout the corridor. In anticipation of the roadway project, HCTRA has constructed several detention ponds and modified several roadways. This process involved coordination with the Union Pacific Railroad.

KEY STREETS

The corridor has several key streets/intersections that bisect the study area. Lorraine, Quitman, Collingsworth and Cavalcade Streets cut across the proposed roadway area as well as the railroad. HCTRA is committed to connecting these neighborhoods, making crossings safer for all users. In preparation for the roadway project HCTRA has made improvements to Collingsworth Street, Lorraine Street, and upcoming Quitman Street. Collingsworth Street is an elevated, overpass, while Lorraine Street is an underpass. HCTRA is also committed to improving other local streets including Hardy, Elysian, and Maury Streets.



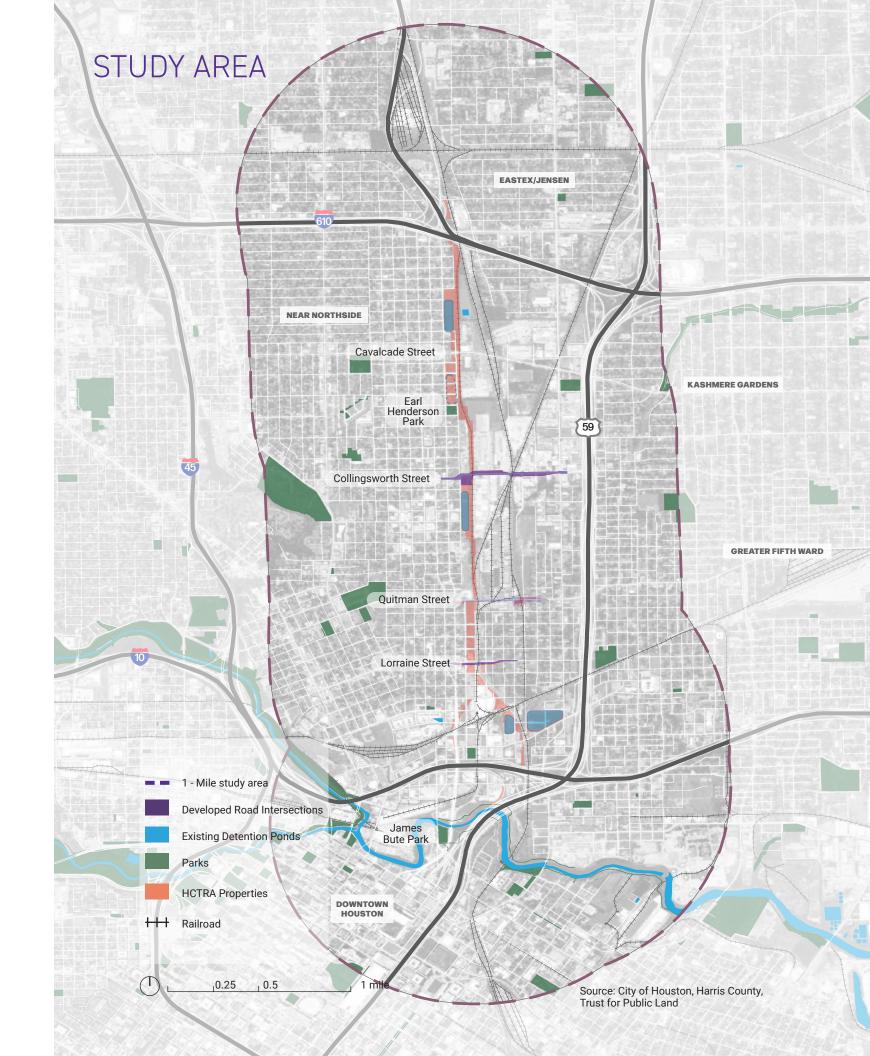
UGK Mural



Low rider car gathering under Elysian Street

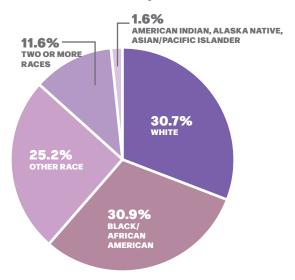


Fifth Ward Jam Park



DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY

When assessing the existing conditions, it is crucial to identify the impacts of the proposed roadway that may extend beyond the areas immediately adjacent to the proposed roadway. The team assessed demographic data of the Near Northside. Greater Fifth Ward, and Kashmere Garden Super Neighborhoods. Historically, these three neighborhoods have experienced the impact of roadways bisecting their communities with the construction of US 59 and I-45. Although US 59 and I-45 help with the circulation of Houston's traffic today, at the neighborhood scale, the creation of the roadways impacted the mobility and the connection between communities residing in the three Super Neighborhoods. Understanding the community's experience and their input on what amenities and features can benefit everyone is important, as it has possibilities to help reconcile and link communities back together.



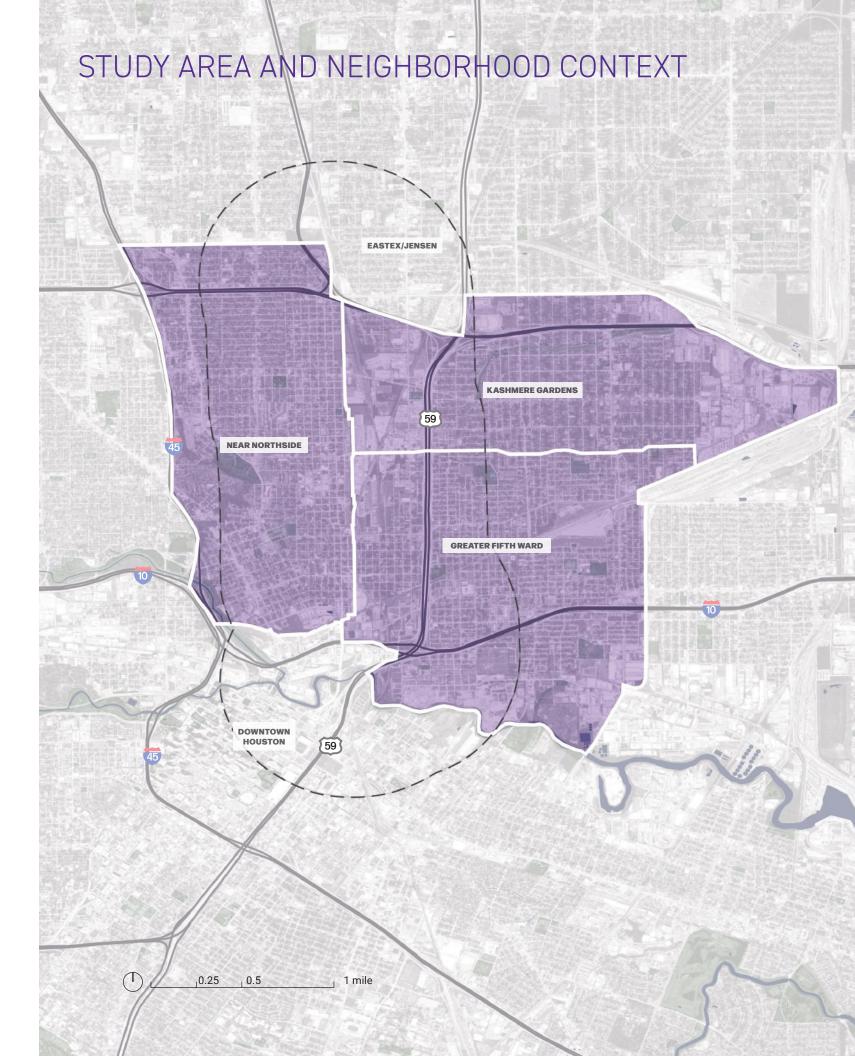
Demographics (2022) Source: American Community Survey 2016-2020

Over 57,000 people reside in these three neighborhoods, with 60% of people being of Hispanic or Latino origin. The racial breakdown of the demographic study area is 30.7% of people identifying as White, 30.9% of people identifying as Black or African American, 25.2% of people identifying as some other race, and 11.6% of people identifying as two or more races, with the remaining 1.6% identify as American Indian/ Alaska Native and Asian/Pacific Islander.



Median household income (2022) Source: American Community Survey 2016-2020

The median income of all three neighborhoods are below the average median household income in the City of Houston and in Harris County.



SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILES

GREATER FIFTH WARD

Greater Fifth Ward is a historically black neighborhood established in 1866 that grew with the influx of freedmen moving into the area seeking economic opportunity. Many of its residents were employed by the Houston Ship Channel and the Southern Pacific Railroad, which contributed to both the population growth within Fifth Ward and in the City of Houston. The neighborhood is also known for Phillis Wheatley High School, which was built to support the growing black population, and has produced some of Houston's notable cultural and political



DeLuxe Theater on Lyons Avenue. Source: Houston Chronicle.

Frenchtown, located along the northern boundary of Greater Fifth Ward, was historically a foursquare block community with a rich Creole culture that was established in 1922. The early residents of Frenchtown were descendants of a mostly free, mixed-race population from southwestern Louisiana and with their settlement in Houston brought in their own distinct language, religion, cuisine, and music. Today, remnants of this community's heritage are found in its shotgun style houses, zydeco music, and in cultural institutions such as the Lyons Theater, the Deluxe Theater, and the Silver Slipper Lounge. It is a reminder of the significant impact of cultural and religious institutions that play an important role in supporting this community.

Source: Texas State Historical Association, Texas Happens, BlackPast.org

KASHMERE GARDENS

Kashmere Gardens is a predominantly African American/Black neighborhood, located near Hunting Bayou. It began developing in the 1930s as part of the Suburban Resettlement Administration program during the New Deal. The program resulted in the creation of 'subsistence homesteads', that were meant to foster selfsufficient communities with small agricultural plots, as well as schools and community centers. Today, these larger plots of land are predominantly single-family residential homes on large lots, and are prone to flooding due to being in the FEMA 100-year floodplain. Home to a number of political figures, including Mickey Leeland, political and social activism has always been prevalent in Kashmere Gardens. One of the key movements in Kashmere Gardens was its role in leading the fight for integration of schools in Houston during the 1960's. From having the first black student enroll in an all white school at Kashmere Elementary School, to students at Kashmere High School protesting against ongoing school segregation in 1965, the community has always been active in vocalizing and promoting equality.

Source: 77026: A History of Kashmere Gardens - Target Hunger, UH Collaborative Community Design Initiative document



Flooding from Hurricane Harvey in Kashmere Gardens

NEAR NORTHSIDE

The Near Northside Super Neighborhood, located within the Greater Northside Neighborhood, was developed along with the expansion of the Hardy Rail Yards beginning in the 1880s'. Initially, it was a working-class neighborhood primarily composed of immigrants from Italy, Germany, Poland, and Czech Republic. Portions of Near Northside were registered under the National Register of Historic Places in 2011, which preserved architectural styles such as Craftsman/ Bungalow, Queen Anne and other revival styles that were built during the 1890s' to the 1940s'. Today, the spirit of a hard-working community lives on in the area with a rich Hispanic culture and history. Near Northside began to see the shift in population begin slowly around 1945, starting at the Super Neighborhood's key streets such as Quitman and Hogan. By the 1970s' the majority of the neighborhood became Hispanic. It is one of Houston's fastest growing neighborhoods with existing and new opportunities for businesses and residents.

Source

https://www.northsidechamber.org/info/history-of-the-northside https://catalog.archives.gov/id/40972388



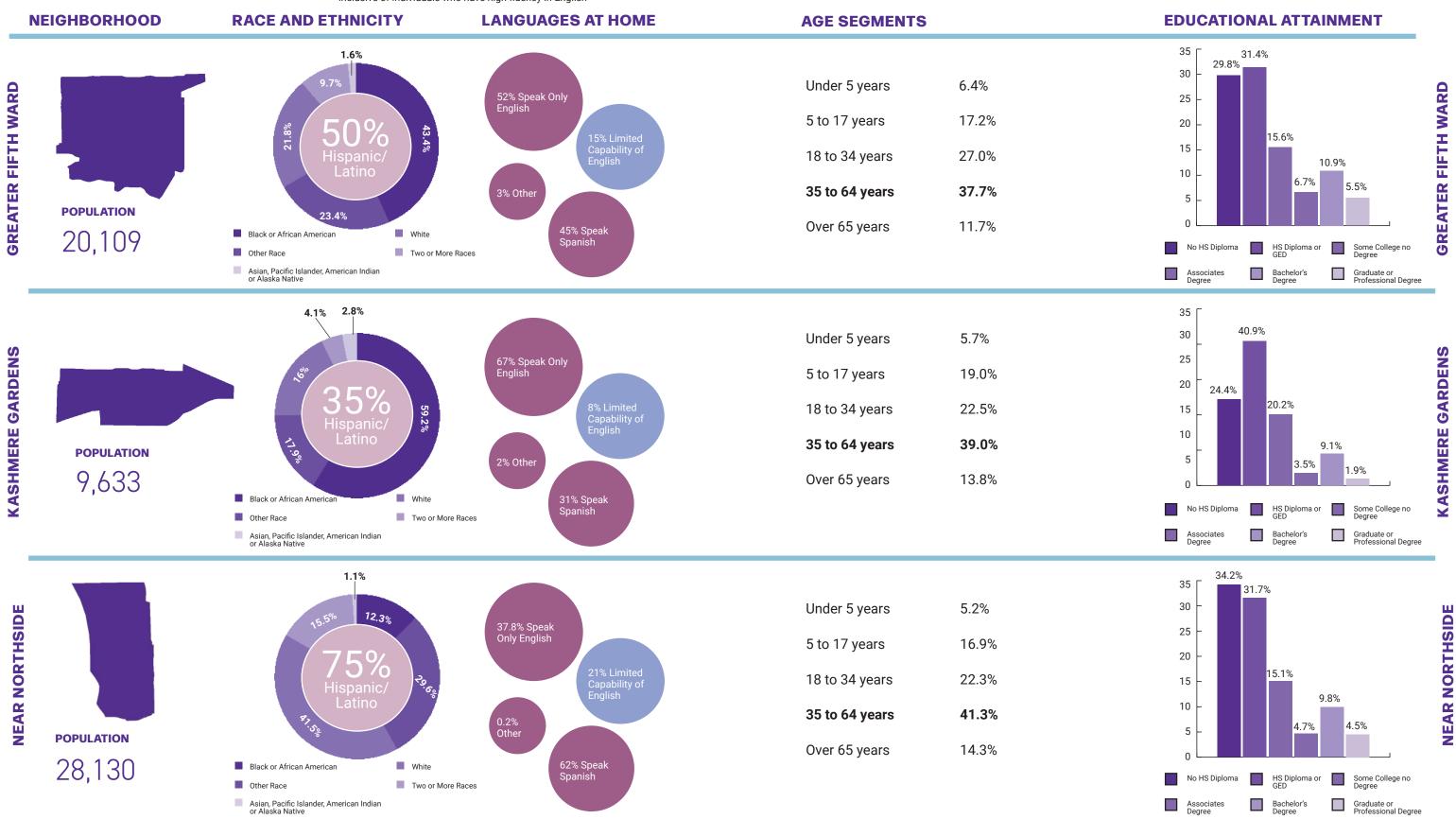
Near Northside Mural. Source: Houston Mural Map



Poppa Burger located on N. Main St

Source: American Community Survey 2016-2020

Note: The percentage of Spanish speakers reflected in the data are inclusive of individuals who have high fluency in English

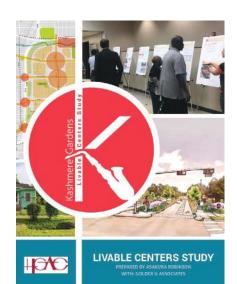


EXISTING PLANS AND STUDIES

The three Super Neighborhoods and other neighborhoods adjacent to the study area have undergone several studies and plans, with some of the plans coming into fruition over the years.

This section highlights some of the studies that have actively engaged community members in the planning process, including the Livable Centers Studies for the respective neighborhoods published by the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC).

The intent of reviewing past studies and plans is to understand past and present community values and priorities, and to integrate these priorities in the goals and planning process for the visioning study.

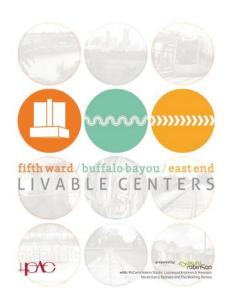


KASHMERE GARDENS LIVABLE CENTERS STUDY (2017)

The 2017 Kashmere Gardens Livable Centers Study identified eight community goals to further the development strategy. Some of the key goals include:

- Ensure that the community benefits from new investment
- Align citywide plans with the community's goals
- Optimize environmental assets and awareness
- Promote healthy communities

These goals strive to ensure that Kashmere Gardens is not left behind in new developments and that community investment, health, and equity are preserved and strengthened.



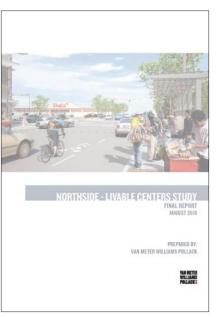
FIFTH WARD/BUFFALO BAYOU/EAST END LIVABLE CENTERS STUDY (2015)

The Fifth Ward/Buffalo
Bayou/East End Livable
Centers Study report includes
recommendations to construct
iconic pedestrian bridges
between East End and
Fifth Ward. This plan has a
potential to strengthen the
neighborhood's identity and
create connections to the
community benefits located at
the southern portions of the
corridor.



FIFTH WARD CULTURAL ARTS DISTRICT PLAN (2020)

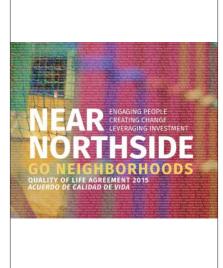
The 2020 plan introduced Public Realm Arts Activation. Arts planning tools such as an Arts and Culture Asset Map, wayfinding signage (banners, painted signs, furnishings, lighting), and underpass art to make walking and biking more comfortable and safe. The incorporation of the recommendations presented in this study are committed to contribute to placemaking, community cohesion, and other benefits for the corridor.



NORTHSIDE LIVABLE CENTERS STUDIES (2010)

The study area for this study document covers a portion of Near Northside, bounded approximately by I-10, I-45, Patton Street, and Elysian Street. The report estimated that the population and traffic growth for the study area would decrease by up to 2% or remain the same. For employment and traffic growth, the study estimated that there would be moderate growth on Elysian and Hardy Street, as well as Quitman and Collingsworth Street. The report found there is minimal development potential, other than lower density housing.

In reviewing this document 14 years after it's completion it can be noted that many of these assumptions have been found untrue.

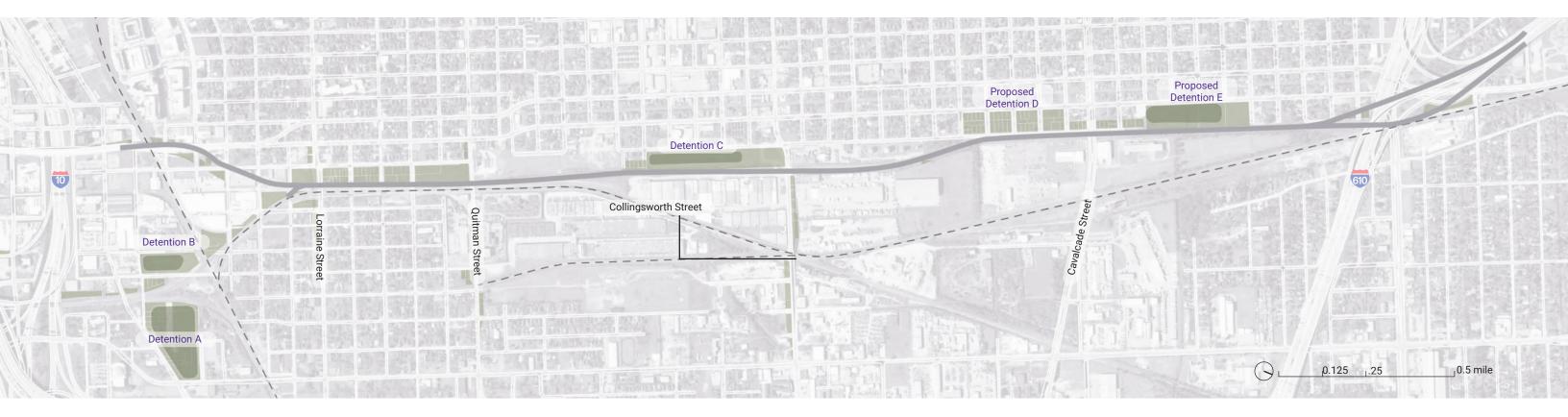


NEAR NORTHSIDE GO NEIGHBORHOODS QUALITY OF LIFE AGREEMENT (2015)

The plan was written in both English and in Spanish, and introduced ten planning categories, including planning for health and supporting the Super Neighborhood initiatives. Some of the goals that coincide with this plan include adding 12 miles of trails and on-street bikeways in the next five years, developing a walkability plan, create a neighborhood coalition to engage with TxDOT and HCTRA projects, and to identify opportunities to develop new parks and expand existing parks.

EXISTING PROJECT DETENTION BASINS

PROPOSED PROJECT DETENTION BASINS





DETENTION BASIN A

Detention basin A is located at the intersection of Lyons Avenue and Jensen Drive. The site has an approximate acreage of 10 acres and is the largest detention basin in the study area. This detention basin is already built.



DETENTION BASIN B

Detention basin B is located to the west of Detention basin A, along West Street. This detention basin is the smallest out of the five detention basin at 3.8 acres. This detention basin is already built.



DETENTION BASIN C

Detention basin C is located just to the south of Collingsworth Street, along Maury Street. The 4.9 acre site spans all the way down to Orr Street. This detention basin is already built.



PROPOSED DETENTION BASIN D

Proposed Detention basin D is located between Elysian Street and Maury Street, between Evelyn Street and Earl Henderson Park. This site was originally proposed for detention but following an environmental review and community input this site will be used for a HCTRA Facility site and community space.



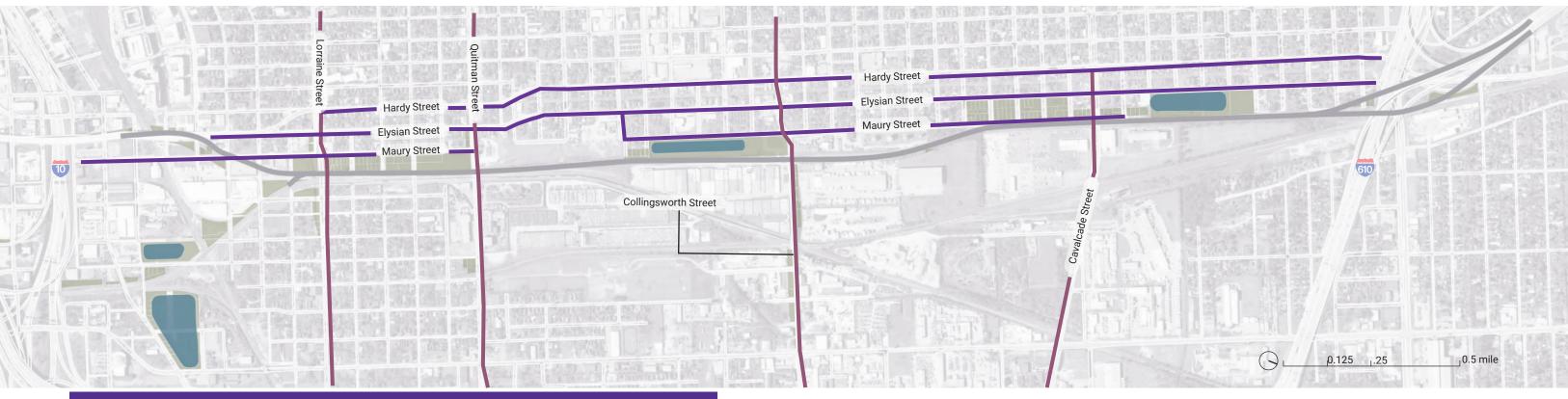
MARCH 2024

PROPOSED DETENTION BASIN E

Detention basin E is located between Griffin Street and Gaines/Maury Street along Elysian Street. The site is approximately 5.6 acres. This detention facility is not currently constructed.

KEY CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS

IDENTIFIED KEY STREETS



HCTRA is committed to improving safety for all users in the construction of these crossings. HCTRA has built two of these crossings (Lorraine and Collingsworth) and is committed to improvements for Quitman in the near future.



LORRAINE STREET

A railroad underpass was recently constructed at Lorraine Street in 2021. The underpass features pedestrian and cyclist amenities, as well as providing seamless travel between the Near Northside and Greater Fifth Ward.



QUITMAN STREET

The designs for the Quitman Street underpass are currently in progress. The land uses surrounding this street include HCTRA-owned open space, industrial, and single family residential uses.



COLLINGSWORTH STREET

The Collingsworth Street overpass was constructed in 2018. Surrounding land uses are predominantly industrial uses.



CAVALCADE STREET

Cavalcade Street is currently a four-lane rightof-way with a median, with two-lanes in each direction. This street features dedicated bike lanes.



MAURY STREET

Maury Street is a local, public right-of-way that runs parallel and adjacent to the Downtown Connector.



HARDY AND ELYSIAN STREETS

Hardy (southbound) and Elysian (northbound) are key north/south connectors in the area. It features protected bike lanes, and services local bus routes 26, 51, and 52.

CURRENT LAND USE **EASTEX/JENSEN** GREATER FIFTH WARD Superfund sites Single Family Residential **Multifamily Residential** Commercial/Office Industrial Public/Institutional Parks/open space Undeveloped **Transit** Source: Harris County Appraisal District, City of Houston, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

LAND USE

The Near Northside, Greater Fifth Ward, and Kashmere Gardens neighborhoods have been integral to the history of Houston and its industrial upbringing. Today, the industrial uses in the study remain, primarily along the existing railroad tracks, mainly between Cavalcade Street and Quitman Street, with additional industrial uses along the railroads that are placed to the north and south of IH-10.

Beyond those areas, however, the largest type of land use observed in the study area consists of single-family residential homes. A majority of this area's commercial and multifamily residential uses correspond with the placement of the METRO Light Rail Red Line along N. Main Street and Fulton Street, as well as with some of the major thoroughfares including Irvington Boulevard and Quitman Street in Near Northside and along Lyons Avenue and Liberty Road in the Greater Fifth Ward.

PARKS

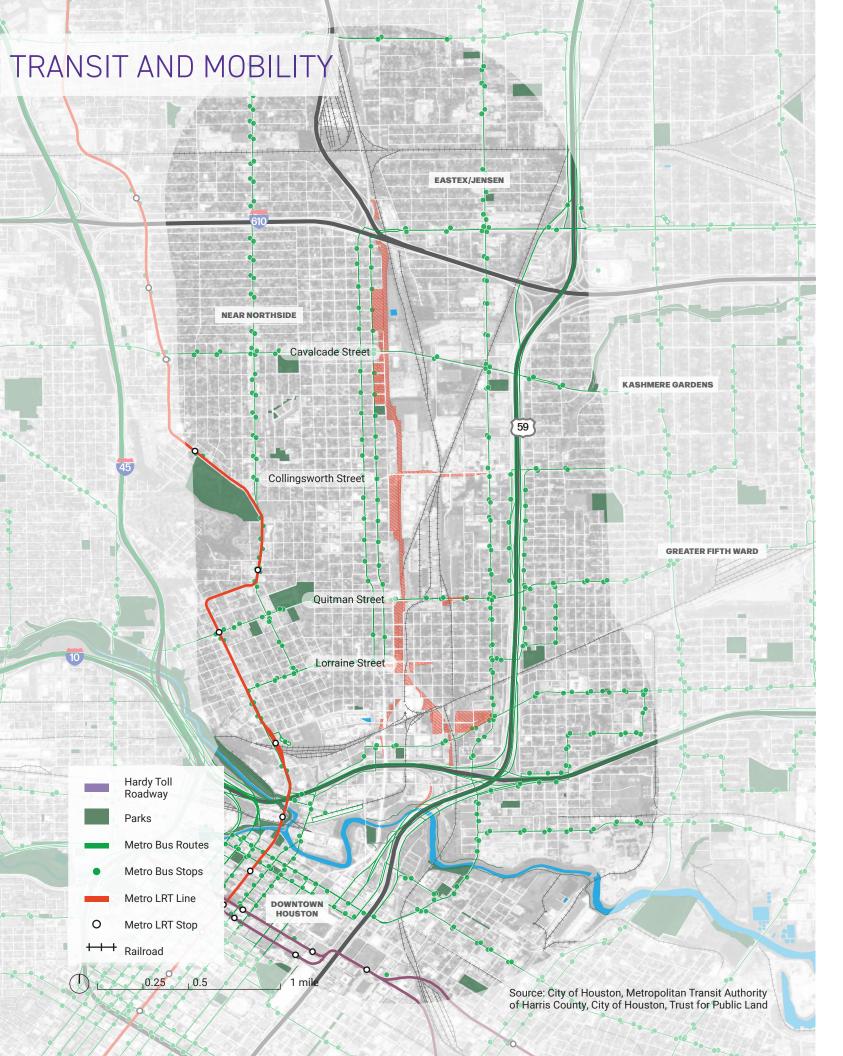
There are 24 parks in the study area, including 4 Community Centers, that provide 96.1 acres of parks and open space to this community, along with 6.4 miles of urban trails. According to the Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) 2015 Master Plan, parklands in Park Sector 17, which includes all three Super Neighborhoods, only make up 1% of the study area. Based on this data and using population data from the 2010 US Data (the most recent Census Data available at the time of this plan), HPARD estimated an additional 55 acres of parkland are needed in the study area.

LAND USE

The table below breaks down the types of land uses seen in the study area.

Land Use Type	Acreage	%
Single Family Residential	1,616.9	33.3%
Undeveloped	1,341. 7	27.7%
Industrial	797.7	16.5%
Transportation/Utility	290	6.0%
Commercial	236.6	4.9%
Public/Institutional	218	4.5%
Multifamily Residential	172.5	3.5%
Office	131	2.7%
Other/Unknown	22.2	0.5%
Parks	18.3	0.4%
Total	4845.8	100%

Source: Harris County Appraisal District, City of Houston



TRANSIT AND MOBILITY

TRANSIT NETWORK

The study area has a robust transit system that connects the three Super Neighborhoods to each other and to surrounding areas. Approximately 7% of the population in the study area rely exclusively on the transit system to commute to their workplaces or schools, and to other destinations.

METRORAIL

The METRORail Red Line services approximately 48,000 people a day, making key stops throughout the City including in downtown Houston, Hermann Park, the Texas Medical Center. A portion of the Red Line operates along North Main and Fulton streets in Near Northside, making six stops at

- · Burnett Transit Center/Casa de Amigos,
- · Ouitman/Near Northside
- · Fulton/North Central
- Moody Park
- Cavalcade
- Lindale Park

Residents that live east of the METRORail Red Line have several connections to METRO bus routes at some of the light rail stations, which broadens people's access to places with use of public transportation.

METRO BUS LINES

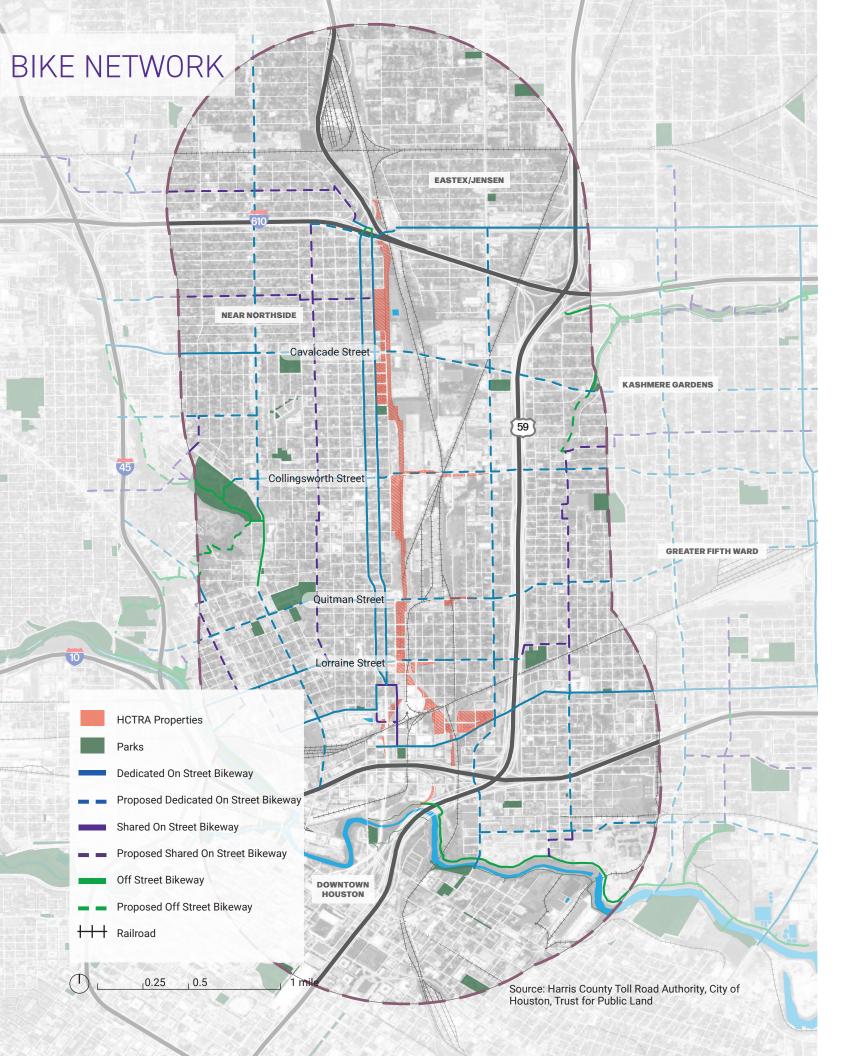
The Near Northside, Greater Fifth Ward, and Kashmere Gardens Super Neighborhoods are serviced by a total of 14 bus routes that connect the three Super Neighborhoods to each other and to other areas in the Greater Houston Area. METRO Bus Line 26 (Cavalcade) is one of the METRO bus routes included in METRO's BOOST Network. This plan, as part of the METRONext Moving Forward Plan, will provide improvements for speed, reliability, and access improvements. Many stops will get enhancements such as new or improved sidewalks, bus shelters with lighting, accessibility upgrades, and other amenities.



METRORail Red Line. Source: Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County



Center. Source: Mythical Transit, Youtube channel.



BIKE NETWORK

The study area's proximity to downtown Houston makes it an ideal location to get around to places by bike. Currently, there are dedicated on-street bikeways along Hardy (South-bound) and Elysian (North-bound) streets, that connect from I-610 and connect to bikeways leading to downtown. There are also other dedicated on-street bikeways along portions of Lyons Avenue, Cavalcade Street (west of Irvington Boulevard), Lorraine Street (west of Elysian Street), and Burnett Street. In addition to this, Moody Park offers some offstreet bikeways within and immediately adjacent to the park.

The Houston Bike Plan proposes numerous dedicated on-street, shared on-street, and off-street bikeways to ensure increased bike connectivity in the area. Overall, the plans for the study area connect major roads, as well as complete connections to the Bayou Greenways systems along Hunts Bayou, White Oak Bayou, and Buffalo Bayou.



Photo of Hardy Street protected bike lane. Source: Bike Houston

MAJOR THOROUGHFARES AND KEY CORRIDORS

The study area contains several major thoroughfares, including I-45, I-610, and I-10, that improve the connectivity both within the Super Neighborhoods and beyond.

Many of the thoroughfares are considered multi-modal, as there are active bus routes, bike lanes, and sidewalks that service more than just vehicular traffic. They are also key corridors for the area's commercial activity, housing many businesses and community amenities such as restaurants, theaters, parks, and services such as laundromats and food marts.

Major thoroughfares that provide north and south connections include:

- Irvington Boulevard
- · Hardy Street
- · Elysian Street
- Jensen Drive

Major thoroughfares that create connections to the east and to the west include:

- · Kelley Street
- Cavalcade Street
- · Collingsworth Street
- Ouitman Street
- Lorraine Street
- Lyons Avenue

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ENVIRONMENT GREATER FIFTH WARD **Developed Road Intersections** Proposed Detention Basin HCTRA Purchased Land Superfund Sites Floodway DOWNTOWN 100 Year Floodplain 500 Year Floodplain ,0.25 Source: Harris County, City of Houston, U.S. **Environmental Protection Agency**

ENVIRONMENT

Studying the environment of this corridor was necessary to understand not only the natural environment, but the corridor's vulnerability to natural disaster, and the history of any environmental issues in the area.

Several of Houston's bayous surround the study area, with Hunting Bayou to the northeast in Kashmere Gardens, Buffalo Bayou to the south, and White Oak Bayou bordering Near Northside to the west. Parks and open space are dispersed throughout the three Super Neighborhoods, available to nearby residents for recreation. While being a source of nature and places of recreation, overflowing of the bayous and the naturally flat topography make this study area prone to some localized flooding.

Additionally, the three Super Neighborhoods have historically contributed to the economic growth of Houston with its industrial businesses and operations. Many jobs were developed from these industries, providing opportunities for many families to build a home and community in the area. It is important, however, to also acknowledge that some of the industrial operations have also contributed to being sources of pollution in the area.

The corridor contains two U.S. EPA superfund sites, North Cavalcade and South Cavalcade. The Superfund sites are located directly next to each other, separated by Cavalcade Street. The sites have an area of 21-acres and 66 acres respectively, and were former creosote woodtreating plants from 1944 to 1962. Both sites were added to the EPA's National Priorities List (NPL) in 1986 and continue to be monitored. More information can be found on the EPA website linked above.

Overall, environmental studies concerning the project area have indicated that the proposed roadway will not have environmental impacts on the surrounding community. Considerations and caution should still be taken throughout design and construction, to ensure that the safety and health of the communities who live, work, and play in the area are maintained, and potentially, improved.



Little White Oak Bayo



Hunting Bayou Trail



VISIONING



DESIGN APPROACH

Following input from the community workshop, the team has distilled key themes and identified specific community needs that must be addressed in the design of the roadway and corridor. The central objectives during the conceptual design phase include:

- Minimizing the impact of the roadway in terms of sound, visual aesthetics, and connectivity.
- Maximizing the use of available land to create more appealing spaces and implement community-centric programs.
- Establishing stronger connections between neighborhoods and the downtown area.
- Enhancing environmental performance through thoughtful design considerations.

With this, the team conducted a series of internal design charrettes to facilitate concept development and design. The comprehensive process encompassed the formulation of design strategies, creation of conceptual sketches, and finalizing the design. All sub-consultants actively participated, bringing diverse expertise to the table. Progress updates were consistently discussed in team meetings.



Sign-in table at the second public workshop

Public Workshop participants providing their feedback at the public workshop.



DEVELOPMENT OF KEY THEMES

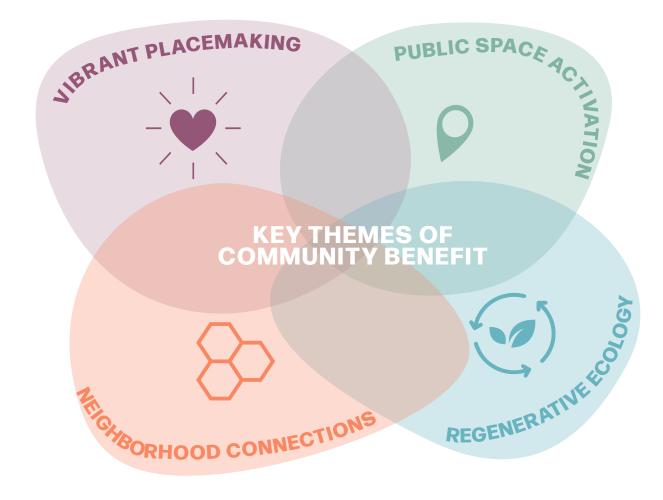
The primary emphasis in the initial concepts is on prioritizing community benefits. Community benefits refer to the overall opportunities associated with the proposed roadway, including social, environmental, and recreational. While traditional roadways primarily focus on vehicles, the Hardy Downtown Connector embraces multimodal connections and brings opportunities to create these improvements. Four key themes were identified through conversations between HCTRA and community stakeholders, representing a variety of possible elements. These elements come together to support the overall vision for community benefit. The overarching goals of these key themes are:

Neighborhood Connections - Establish a multimodal transit system to ensure seamless, interconnected, and safe experiences for individuals navigating diverse modes and conditions.

Vibrant Placemaking - Craft spaces that encourage social interactions and infuse vibrancy into communities.

Public Space Activation - Recognize opportunities within public areas and initiate efforts to create an appealing and attractive public realm.

Regenerative Ecology - Undertake initiatives to restore, renew, and revitalize ecosystems, aiming to enhance and improve environmental conditions.







BALANCING PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE ACCESS ALONG THE CORRIDOR BY ENHANCING STREET CROSSINGS, OVERALL PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE **SAFETY**, AND TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS THAT WILL IMPROVE THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE AND COMFORT.

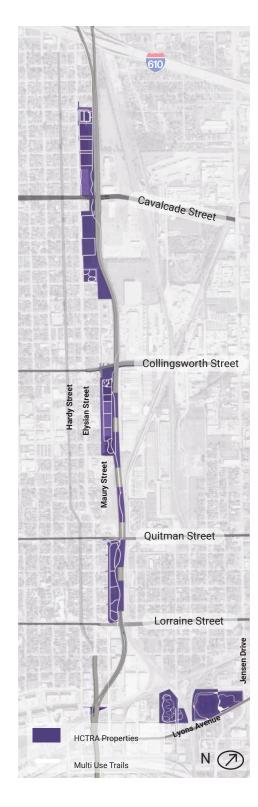
POSSIBLE DESIGN ELEMENTS OF NEIGHBORHOOD **CONNECTIONS:**

- Universal Accessibility
- Safe Crossings
- Bike Parking
- Shared Trails
- · Bike Lanes Addition/Improvement
- Road Narrowing at Street Intersections
- Comfort Elements (Street trees, lighting, etc)

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS



NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS



In an effort to minimize the roadway's impact on neighborhood connections, the team explored diverse approaches to enhance connectivity. This involved devising a comprehensive multi-use path extending from I-610 to Downtown, proposing innovative designs for new neighborhood roadways like Maury, Hardy and Elysian, and introducing pedestrian/bike bridges over key intersections. Additionally, the conceptual design considered various options for railway crossings, presenting unique opportunities for placemaking.

MULTI-USE TRAIL

Over 7 Miles





Lyons Avenue and Jenson Drive



Neighborhood Connections



Elysian Viaduct



Multi Use Trail



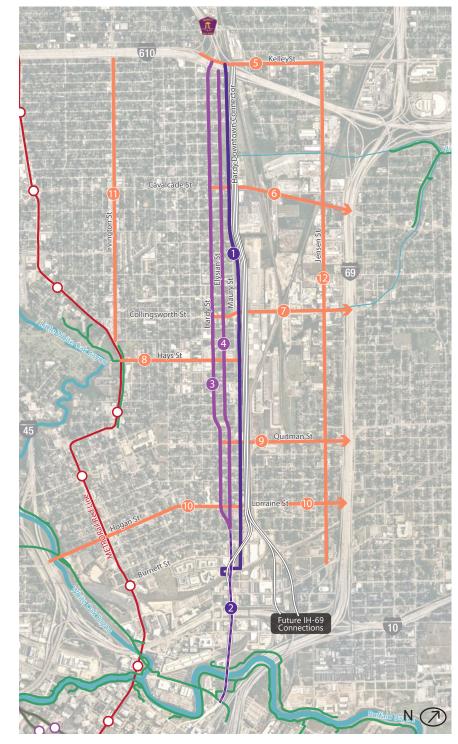
Multi Use Trail



Multi Use Trail

MULTIMODAL CONNECTIONS

The Hardy Downtown Connector provides an opportunity to enhance multimodal connections along the primary corridor and in the surrounding neighborhoods. Some improvements are able to be led by HCTRA and others require partnerships with agencies like the City of Houston and other Harris County departments.



A multi-use walking and biking trail is proposed along the roadway alignment from 610 to Lorraine with connections into Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

Elysian Viaduct trail linkage into Downtown and bayou trails.

Restore **Hardy and Elysian Streets** to twoway neighborhood streets. Potential roadway 4 features include continuous sidewalks, onstreet parking, and enhanced landscaping.

Kelley Street could be reconstructed with enhanced, safe bikeways, additional landscaping, and sidewalks.

Cavalcade Street improvements could include improved sidewalks and crossings, protected bike lanes and improved bus stops and transit amenities

Collingsworth Street could be improved with a retrofit of the existing overpass to widen the narrow sidewalks and provide a multi-use walking and biking path.

Hays Street could include a bike route and sidewalk improvements linking the Connector to Moody Park.

Quitman Street provides an opportunity to coordinate with the Quitman overpass project to provide high-comfort bikeways and sidewalks from the overpass east to Jensen Drive.

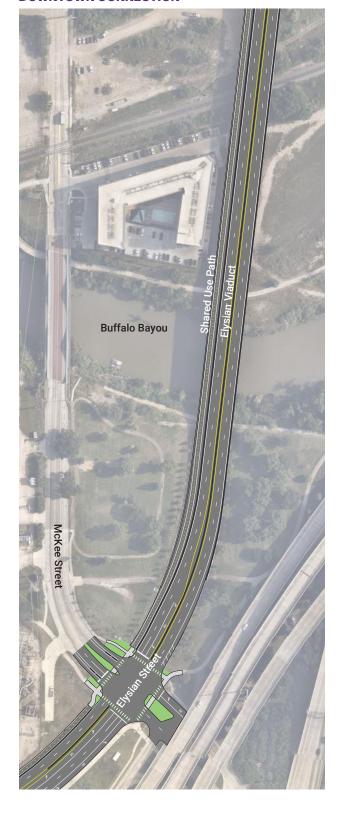
Hogan and Lorraine Streets provide an opportunity to rebuild these corridors fo people walking, biking, and using transit

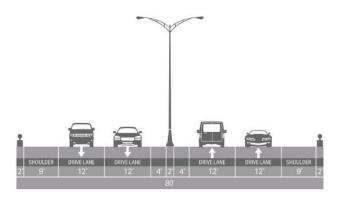
Irvington Boulevard is a partnership opportunity to provide protected bike lanes, continuous sidewalks, and transit enhancements.

Jensen Drive could be reconstructed to provide continuous sidewalks and a high-comfort bikeway.

ELYSIAN VIADUCT

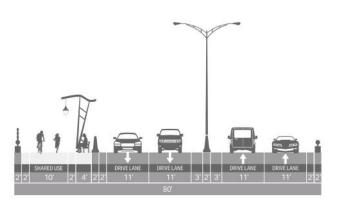
DOWNTOWN CONNECTION





EXISTING VIADUCT

The existing roadway structure includes two wide travel lanes in each direction plus shoulders. The wide roadway contributes to high vehicle speeds, with no space for people walking or bicycling.



PROPOSED VIADUCT

The proposed re-allocation of space on the Elysian Viaduct would maintain two vehicle lanes in each direction, but narrow their overall footprint. This creates enough space for a shared-use trail.



EXPERIENCE TRAVELING INTO DOWNTOWN

The proposed multi-use trail, located on the west side of the Elysian Viaduct, would have unobstructed views of downtown Houston and Buffalo Bayou. The proposed cross-section provides enough room along the trail for additional design features and amenities that could include shade structures, a green buffer wall, seating, and lighting.

ELYSIAN VIADUCT

NORTHSIDE CONNECTIONS



Public Space and Access to the Viaduct
The Elysian Viaduct is elevated well above the
surrounding street network, requiring a long ADAcompliant ramp to reach the shared-use path on
the Viaduct. The area around the ramp presents
an opportunity for a public space that could
include natural features and park amenities.

Examples of green spaces with pedestrian and bicycling ramps









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VIBRANT PLACEMAKING

CREATE A UNIQUE IDENTITY FOR THE CORRIDOR THROUGH VIBRANT GATEWAYS, SIGNAGE, AND BRANDING. THIS INCLUDES ENGAGING PUBLIC ART, NEIGHBORHOOD/ COMMUNITY BRANDING AND INTEGRATION OF NATURE THEMED MURALS THAT TELL A STORY OF CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND ECOLOGICAL HISTORY AND THE VOICES OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

POSSIBLE DESIGN ELEMENTS OF VIBRANT PLACEMAKING:

- Public Art Spaces
- Murals / Art Intervention
- Gateways/Monuments
- Painted Crosswalks
- · Neighborhood Signage And Branding
- Interpretive Signage



VIBRANT PLACEMAKING

Public space activation transforms spaces from passive areas into dynamic and inclusive environments that contribute positively to the community. Activation involves creating an engaging and vibrant atmosphere within these spaces to encourage community interaction, recreation, and a sense of place. The potential within the corridor is found at key intersections and sites benefiting the community. The conceptual design strategy involves incorporating murals, artistic crosswalks, sculptures, and gateways.



Sculptures

OPEN SPACE

Over 30 Acres



Murals on Roadway and in Parks



Public Art and Community Pavilion

All quantities are approximate and based on calculations and the conceptual design.

POTENTIAL PLACEMAKING OPPORTUNITIES



ART INSTALLATION

SCULPTURE

Sculptures can represent the identity, history and culture of the community and also act as a landmark or gateway into neighborhoods.

MINI ART INSTALLATION

Mini art installations create opportunities for people to engage with art sand culture at a more intimate and smaller scale.



INTERACTIVE ART INSTALLATION

Interactive art installations incorporate art and play together, making it a feature that all ages can enjoy.



ARTISTIC CROSSWALKS

PAINTED INTERSECTIONS

Painted intersections add dynamic art to intersections, making them more visible, safe, and engaging for all users.



PAINTED CROSSWALKS

Art can be incorporated into crossings at smaller scales, such as crosswalks.



CURB EXTENSIONS AND BULB OUTS

Artistic curb extensions and bulb outs are a visually stimulating way to slow down vehicular traffic and improve pedestrian safety.



MURALS

COLUMN MURALS

Adding artwork on columns are an eye catching feature that can be incorporated on the roadway.



WALL MURALS

Wall murals add color and character to an area, making a drive, walk, or bike ride by it engaging and fun.



ARTISTIC LIGHTING

Leveraging lighting fixtures as part of art incorporated throughout the roadway, address safety and visibility concerns.



VISIONING THE HARDY DOWNTOWN CONNECTOR MARCH 2024 WISIONING THE HARDY DOWNTOWN CONNECTOR 65



PUBLIC SPACE ACTIVATION

THE FUTURE CORRIDOR WILL CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO ACTIVATE CURRENTLY UNDERUTILIZED PARCELS OF LAND ALONG THE LINEAR CORRIDOR. PUBLIC SPACE ACTIVATION **CREATES NEW COMMUNITY RESOURCES** SUCH AS PARKS AND PARKLETS TO PROVIDE SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS.

POSSIBLE DESIGN ELEMENTS OF PUBLIC SPACE

- Courtyards / Plazas
- Public Market Space / Open Air Flea Market Stalls
- Local Agriculture
- Soccer Fields
- Playgrounds
- Amphitheater / Gathering Spaces



PUBLIC SPACE ACTIVATION



Public space activation transforms spaces from passive areas into dynamic and inclusive environments that contribute positively to the community. Activation involves creating an engaging and vibrant atmosphere within these spaces to encourage community interaction, recreation, and a sense of place.

Capitalizing on five HCTRA-owned sites, the visioning formulates site plans that enhance neighborhood connections and facilitate diverse programming. The range of programs spans from passive to active uses, fostering increased neighborhood engagement. Detention areas on four sites are retained, and for those with proposed decks and hard surfaces, bioswales beneath the roadway can be designed to ensure compliance with City of Houston requirements for overall detention requirements. Strategic partnerships will be necessary to bring programming on these sites to life. The community should be highly involved in making and managing these partnerships between HCTRA and other public and community groups. The following pages detail specific programming that will require further partnerships.

SPORTS & PROGRAMMED PARTNERSHIPS

Over 8 Acres

COMMUNITY DECKS

Over 2 Acres

All quantities are approximate and based on calculations and the conceptual design.

POTENTIAL PUBLIC SPACE ACTIVATION OPPORTUNITIES



Boardwalk



Playgrounds



Sports Fields

PROGRAMMING CONSIDERATIONS

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING POSSIBILITIES

Community Programming supports activities that are accessible and enjoyable for all groups of people.







Picnic Area

Dog Park

Event Ground







Community Park

Deck Area

Splash Pad





Exercise Park

Interactive Art

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING POSSIBILITIES

Educational programming enriches culture, learning, and more.







Outdoor Learning Center

Outdoor Pavilion

Educational Trail





Story Walk

MARCH 2024

Bike Safety Course

NATURAL PROGRAMMING POSSIBILITIES

Nature features provides people education and access to the local, natural environment.







Urban Farm

Urban Wetland

Pollinator Garden



Botanical Garden

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING POSSIBILITIES

Recreational programming promotes physical activity and wellbeing.







Tennis

Pickleball

Basketball





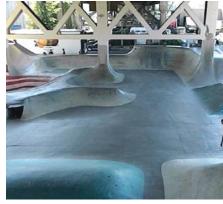




Football & Soccer

Baseball

Adventure Course





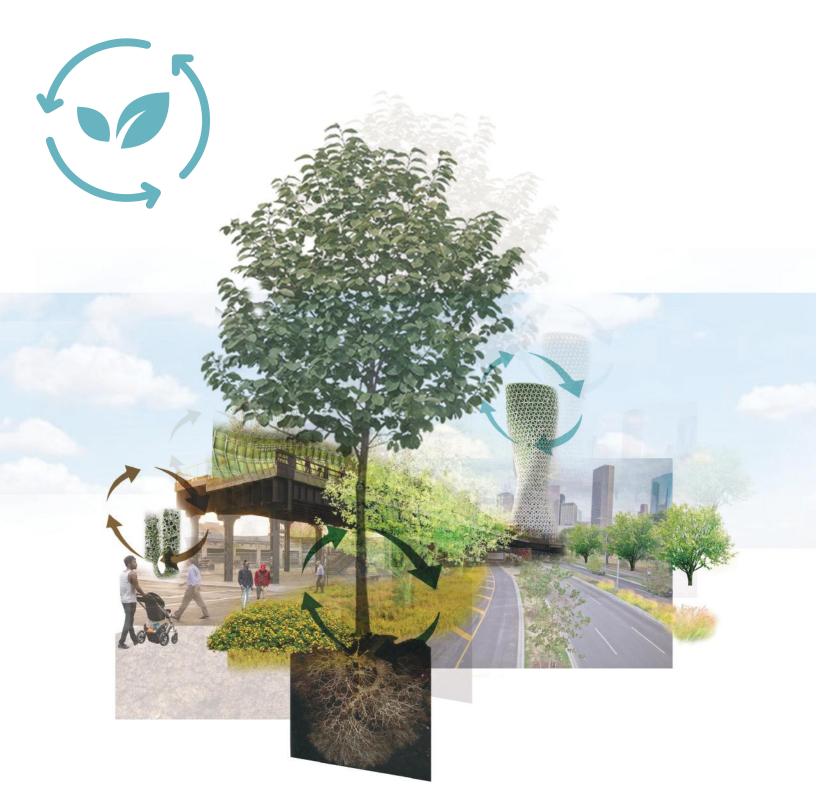


Skateboarding

MARCH 2024

Outdoor Climbing

Cycling Track



REGENERATIVE ECOLOGY

GOING BEYOND MITIGATION BY IMPROVING URBAN ECOLOGY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND THE **SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE** ALONG THE CORRIDOR.

POSSIBLE DESIGN ELEMENTS OF REGENERATIVE

- Green Stormwater Infrastructure (Bioswales, rain gardens)
- Green Walls / Passive Cooling Fences
- Renewable Energy
- Noise/Sound barriers
- Soil Remediation
- Carbon Sequestration
- Rainwater Harvesting



REGENERATIVE ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Regenerative ecology is an approach to environmental and ecological management that seeks to restore, renew, and revitalize ecosystems. It goes beyond traditional conservation or sustainable practices by actively enhancing and promoting the health and resilience of ecosystems. The conceptual design prioritizes addressing environmental concerns, encompassing stormwater management, noise reduction, and air quality improvements. Strategies include implementing sound barriers along the roadway to mitigate noise levels, incorporating green columns for air filtration, and structuring the roadway to filter and store stormwater effectively.

STORMWATER DETENTION

Approximately 45 Acre-feet

(1 Acre-Feet is the volume of stormwater that would cover one acre to a depth of one foot.)

TREE CANOPY

Over 3,200 Proposed New Trees

VERTICAL GREEN COLUMNS

Over 8,000 Square-Feet

ANNUAL ENERGY GENERATION

Over 350,000 Kwh (From proposed solar panels)

NOISE BARRIER

Over 1.5 Miles

ANNUAL RATE OF CARBON SEQUESTRATION

Over 490,000 Lbs.

(Total amount of carbon dioxide captured from the atmosphere and stored in the trunk, roots, and canopy of the proposed trees each year.)

All quantities are approximate and based on calculations and the conceptual design.

POTENTIAL REGENERATIVE ECOLOGY OPPORTUNITIES



WATER MANAGEMENT

WATER STORAGE •

To manage roadway stormwater run-off, water storage can be built into the highway structure to collect rainwater and store for irrigation.

BIOSWALES -

Bioswales can run under elevated roadway sections to retain and filter rainwater while providing higher quality pedestrian experiences.

RAINWATER HARVESTING **♦**



Rainwater harvesting can be integrated into community benefit areas to irrigate natural features that provide social and ecological benefits.





AIR AND SOUND QUALITY

SOUND BARRIERS ===

New sound barrier materials offer enhanced roadway sound reduction while providing a colorful yet durable visual quality to key road sections.

VERTICAL GREEN WALLS ••••

Vertical greenery along columns and walls can enhance air quality, cool the air, absorb sound, and enhance pedestrian experiences.

QUIET PAVEMENT & GHG ABSORBING CONCRETE

Strategic use of innovative roadway materials can mitigate roadway noise, reduce water pooling on road surfaces, and mitigate emissions.

Native trees can be planted on the Hardy Downtown Connector to provide air quality mitigation.



ECOLOGICAL REGENERATION

BIOSWALES FOR STORMWATER |||||||||| **RUN-OFF TREATMENT**

Installing bioswales throughout the project can provide ecosystem, social, & health benefits while slowing, filtering, & absorbing run-off.

RESTORE & IMPROVE HABITAT QUALITY ====

Employing native plantings of trees & perennials in key community use areas can aid in habitat restoration alongside social and health benefits.





VISIONING THE HARDY DOWNTOWN CONNECTOR **MARCH 2024** VISIONING THE HARDY DOWNTOWN CONNECTOR 77 **MARCH 2024**

NOISE AND AIR QUALITY

Noise and air quality were major concerns highlighted in the first workshop. To address potential noise and air impacts, the roadway can include noise barriers and air quality design techniques that can reduce noise and air quality impacts throughout the area. Contemporary noise barriers offer improved visual quality alongside effective noise reduction and brings additional sustainability benefits through solar energy production. Using green barriers and native plantings can provide a wide range of air quality benefits, mitigating roadway pollution throughout the area while also providing social benefits by creating more beautiful, multi-functional public spaces.

Air Quality

Recent research has continued to show that bringing green features into roadway design can provide a wide variety of air quality benefits, in addition to other health and social benefits to surrounding communities. Green features such as green walls, native plantings, trees, and bioswales have been shown to be effective at reducing air pollution from effecting surrounding neighborhoods. They can also reduce pollution impacts around the roadway, particularly for children, the elderly, and other groups most vulnerable to poor air quality. These green features can further provide additional health benefits (ex. reduced urban heat), environmental benefits (ex. pollinator habitats), and social benefits (ex. improved community spaces).



Examples of Bio-swale & Green Wall



Possible Locations of Trees on Hardy Downtown Connector Roadway



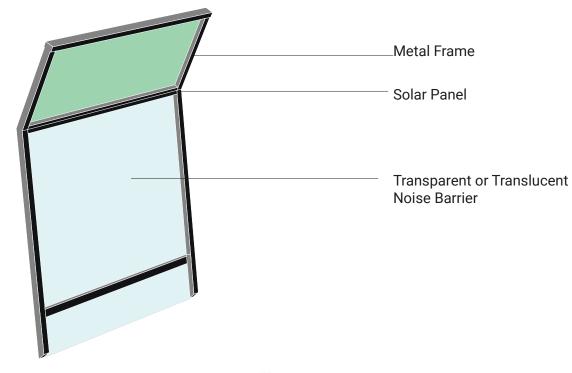
Examples of Native Planting & Trees

Noise Barrier

The noise barriers shown in this visioning concept can provide high quality noise reduction, performing as well as traditional concrete barriers while providing additional benefits. The clear, colorful panels are lightweight, durable, and offer aesthetic value without sacrificing performance. Angled top frames further reduce noise impacts by reflecting sound back towards the roadway, while also holding solar panels that can reduce roadway energy consumption.



Noise Barrier Conceptual Design



Noise Barrier Conceptual Design Shown on Roadway



VISIONING THE CORRIDOR



WHAT WAS HEARD

25% of all comments from the first community workshop were connected to design components of the Hardy Downtown Connector's roadway. The top priorities in these comments were:

- Noise Quality
- Air Quality
- The Roadways Interaction with New Public Spaces
- Transit Options on the Roadway

ROADWAY INTERACTIONS WITH COMMUNITY BENEFIT AREAS, NOISE AND AIR QUALITY

The roadway conceptual design was shaped around the roadways interaction with the 5 community benefit sites, this larger area is referred to as the "corridor". Similarly, noise and air quality concerns have remained a focus of the visioning. Two main strategies include a "cut and cover" roadway option where feasible, and strategic placement of an elevated portion of the roadway that includes sound barriers. Planting strategies along the area can additionally mitigate air quality conditions.

THE CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

The conceptual design of the roadway is detailed on the next pages. The cut and cover conceptual roadway is shown in section A-A and B-B on page 74. The elevation portion of the roadway is detailed on section C-C on page 75.

CONCEPTUAL CUT AND COVER ROADWAY



The conceptual cut and cover section of the roadway can be designed to maximize the available space for community benefit sites. The covered section of the roadway offers the opportunity for a linear park that can redefine greenspace. Additional benefits of the cut and cover includes noise and air quality mitigation in the community benefit areas as well as the elevation change (hills) provide special walk and biking experiences. The cut and cover concept would not be a continuous tunnel, but a strategic cover of benefit areas, while allowing passive ventilation in other areas.

Example of Conceptual Cut and Cover Roadway



SECTION A-A



SECTION B-B

CONCEPTUAL ELEVATED ROADWAY



The elevated portion of the roadway would allow minimal disruption between the community benefit sites and the roadway. The use of sound barriers can limit noise in community benefit areas and the community along the project. The area below the elevated roadway can be used for planting, detention, and parking.

Conceptual Example of Elevated Roadway

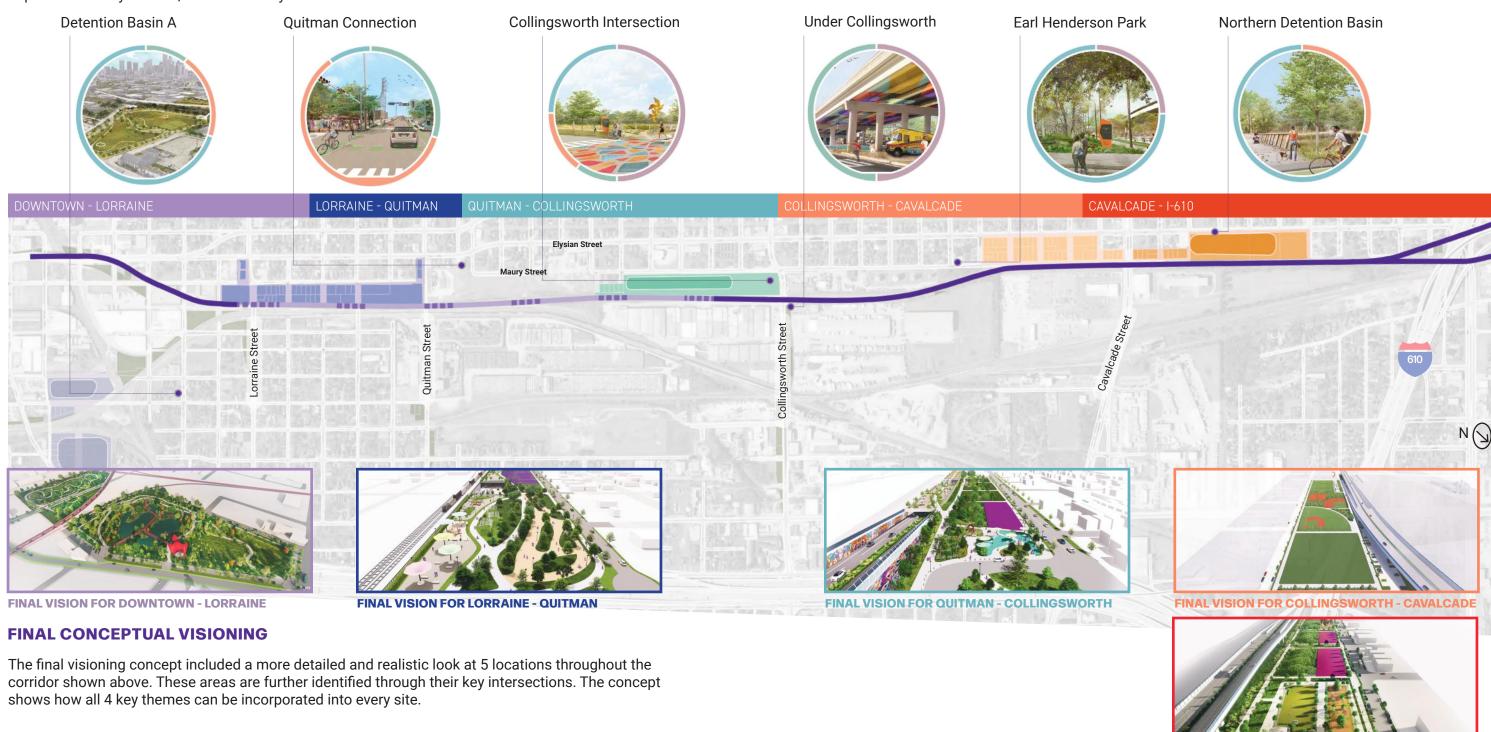


SECTION C-C

VISIONING COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITES

PRELIMINARY VISIONING

Preliminary conceptual design included "visions" of a dozen sites throughout the project area. This early concept of the corridor was used to better gain public feedback and opinion on site programing, importance of key themes, and community benefit site locations.

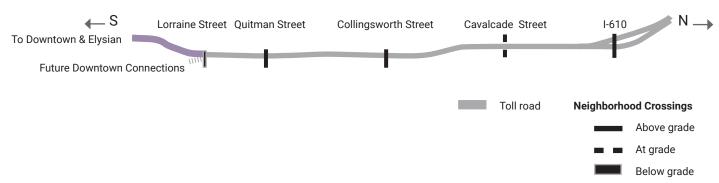


MARCH 2024

FINAL VISION FOR CAVALCADE - NORTH I-610

COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE DOWNTOWN - LORRAINE





PROGRAMMING AT THIS COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE:

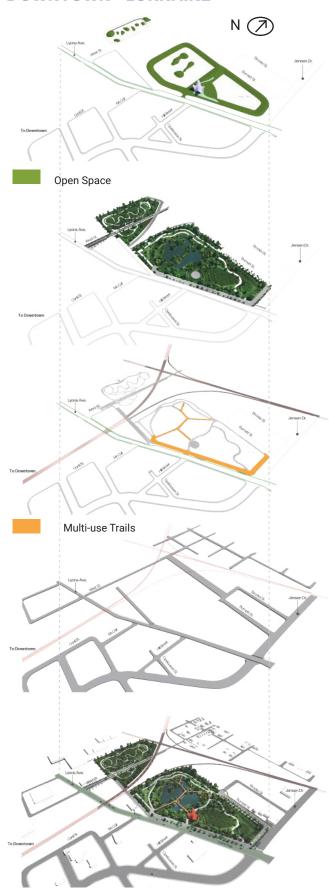
The downtown to Lorraine section of the corridor provides an important link to downtown Houston. The roadway can be elevated in this section to make its connection to other downtown highways. The community benefit sites provided in this segment include what has previously been referred to as Detention Basins A&B.

Programming at Detention Basins A&B includes a proposed wet detention basin with vibrant pedestrian walkways and boardwalks. Space for active and adventure based recreational activities could possibly be further developed within this site. A diverse landscape and pedestrian environment can provide linkages to the neighborhoods and downtown.

THE ROADWAY AT THIS COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE:

The roadway does not interact with this community benefit site. The main purpose of HCTRA's ownership of this site is for stormwater detention.

DOWNTOWN - LORRAINE





Active Recreation
Over 2 acres

Passive Recreation / Gathering Over 9 acres

1 Community Pavilion

Total Area Over 13 acres

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

Stormwater Detention In-Ground Option Approximately 5 acre-feet Box Storage Under Pavement Option Approximately 3 acre-feet

Trees Over 800 trees

Approximately Annual Carbon Sequestration:125,000 lbs

Approximately Annual Stormwater Mitigation: 1,700,000 gallons

POTENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

Multi-use Trails Approximately 2 miles

All quantities are approximate and based on calculations and the conceptual design.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE

DOWNTOWN - LORRAINE



PERSPECTIVE 1 - LYONS AVENUE AND JENSEN DRIVE

This rendering illustrates the possible enhancements at the intersection of Lyons Avenue and Jensen Drive, featuring new bike lanes, on-street parking, improved pedestrian crossings, and a potential promenade designed in Detention Basin B.



PERSPECTIVE 2 - BASIN BOARDWALK

The Detention Basin B conceptual design incorporates boardwalks, providing an opportunity for people to stroll along the detention area and interact with the water feature during rainfall events.

DOWNTOWN - LORRAINE



PERSPECTIVE 3 - MULTI-USE TRAIL

The multi-use trail can be designed for both walking and biking, with the goal of promoting a healthy lifestyle and establishing connections between Detention Basin A&B and the surrounding neighborhoods.



PERSPECTIVE 4 - PAVILION

This perspective showcases the possibility of a amphitheater design within Detention Basin B, featuring terrace seating, a canopy, and a stage. The amphitheater can be designed to infuse vibrancy into the community.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE

DOWNTOWN - LORRAINE



PERSPECTIVE 5 - PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY

A pedestrian walkway can be implemented in Detention Basin A&B, distinctively separated from the multi-use trails to offer a unique walking experience. This pathway can provide views of landscapes with varying elevations.



PERSPECTIVE 6 - ELYSIAN VIADUCT

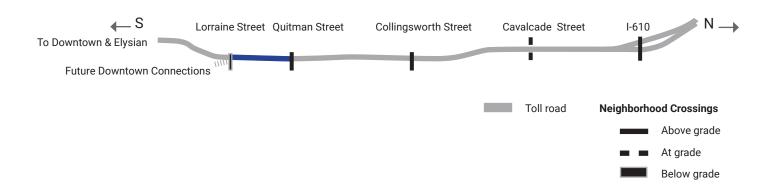
This conceptual viewpoint depicts the Elysian viaduct spanning across the bayou, offering a Downtown view. The viaduct can feature protected multi-use trails, complete with amenities like benches, shade structures, and lighting. The objective is to ensure a secure and enjoyable experience for pedestrians and cyclists.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE LORRAINE - QUITMAN



COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE

LORRAINE - QUITMAN



PROGRAMMING AT THIS COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE:

The Lorraine - Quitman section of the corridor shows a cut and cover roadway conceptual design that offers more open programmable space for the community benefit site.

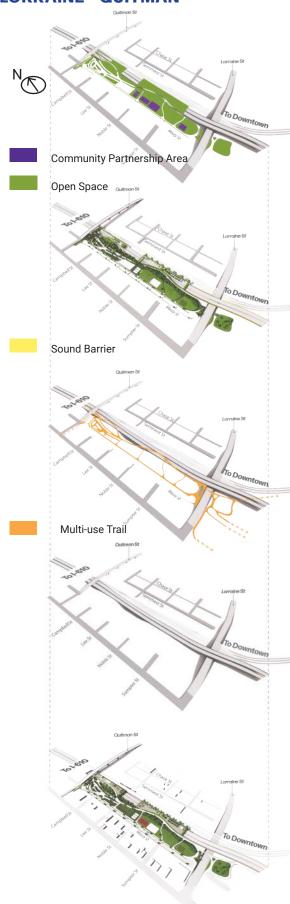
Programming at this site can include a diverse variety of active spaces and community spaces.

Ample pedestrian walkways and pedestrian crossings over Lorraine Street and Quitman Street can be provided. The conceptual design also unites the elevation change between the roadway and the community benefit site to potentially create an interesting experience of landscape and multi-use paths.

THE ROADWAY AT THIS COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE:

At Lorraine-Quitman this roadway concept descends from an elevated roadway to a cut and covered section. The majority of this community benefit site can be a linear park over the roadway.

LORRAINE - QUITMAN





Active Recreation Under 0.5 acres

Passive Recreation/ Gathering Approximately 8 acres

Total Area Over 9 acres

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

Stormwater Detention In-Ground Option Approximately 3 acre-feet Box Storage Under Pavement Option Approximately 4.5 acre-feet

Trees

Over 750 Trees Approximate Annual Carbon Sequestration: 1,574,749 Gallon

Vertical Green Columns Over 1,500 sq.ft.

Solar Panel Concept Over 9,000 sq.ft. Approximate Annual Energy generation: 167,000kWh

POTENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

Multi-use Trails Over 1 mile

All quantities are approximate and based on calculations and the conceptual design.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE

LORRAINE - QUITMAN



PERSPECTIVE 1 - PUBLIC ART PLAZA

The scene illustrates the bridge spanning over Lorraine, incorporating possible design elements such as public art, imaginative lighting, and native plants. This creates an environment for people to walk, bike, and leisurely enjoy the surroundings.



PERSPECTIVE 2 - PLAYGROUND AND FAMILY AREA

The layout at Lorraine and Quitman can incorporate a family-friendly space with features like a playground, splash pad, and exercise areas, providing a designated area for families to spend quality time together.

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LORRAINE - QUITMAN



PERSPECTIVE 3 - MULTI-USE TRAIL

The multi-use trail can be strategically designed to enhance connections by adapting to available sites. It can follows the natural elevation changes, offering a distinctive experience as it ascends and descends along the route.



PERSPECTIVE 4 - NEIGHBORHOOD PROMENADE AND DETENTION BASIN

The local promenade can features an expanded sidewalk and street furniture, providing space for play and leisure. On-site detention can be intentionally landscaped with native plants, enhancing visual appeal and attraction.

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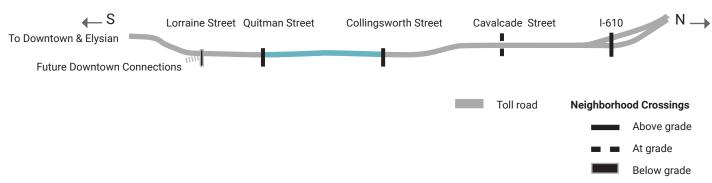
MARCH 2024

COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE QUITMAN - COLLINGSWORTH



COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE

QUITMAN - COLLINGSWORTH



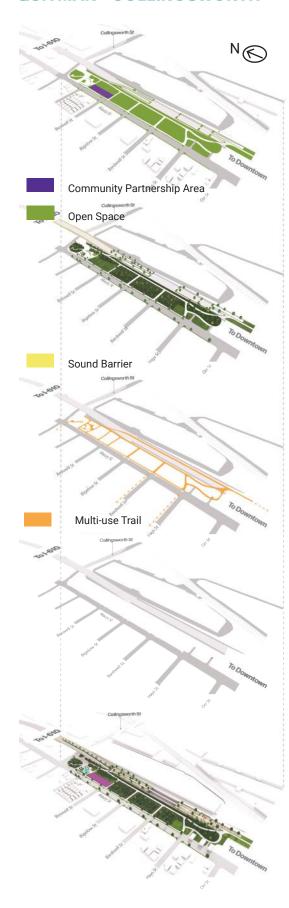
PROGRAMMING AT THIS COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE:

The Quitman-Collingsworth section of the corridor can provide a cut and cover roadway design concept that offers more open programmable space for the community benefit site. Programming at Quitman - Collingsworth can include a diverse variety of active spaces and community spaces. The elevation change between the Hardy Downtown Connector and the community benefit sites can create a multipurpose wall for art and landscape opportunities.

THE ROADWAY AT THIS COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE:

At Quitman-Collingsworth the roadway can transitions from cut and covered to elevated. A majority of this community benefit site can remain a linear park over the roadway.

QUITMAN - COLLINGSWORTH





Active Recreation Under 1 acre

Passive Recreation / Gathering Approximately 6 acres

Total Area Over 7.5 acres

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

Stormwater Detention In-Ground Option Approximately 10 acre-feet Box Storage Under Pavement Option Approximately 7 acre-feet

Trees
Over 800 Trees
Approximate Annual Carbon Sequestration:1,699,412 Gallon

Solar Panels Over 5,500 sq. ft. Approximate Annual Energy Generation:105,000 KWh

POTENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

Multi-use Trail Over 1 mile

All quantities are approximate and based on calculations and the conceptual design.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE

QUITMAN - COLLINGSWORTH



PERSPECTIVE 1 - PUBLIC ART PLAZA

The public art plaza can serve as an entry point at the intersection of Collingsworth and Maury, incorporating conceptual design elements such as wayfinding signage, art installations, and street furniture.



PERSPECTIVE 2 - PLAYGROUND AND FAMILY AREA

The family and playground area can be crafted to meet the requirements for a secure play area for children and a gathering space for families. It can include playful features and amenities for seating and congregating.

QUITMAN - COLLINGSWORTH



PERSPECTIVE 3 - MULTI-USE TRAIL AND DETENTION BASIN

The multi-use trail in this section can establish connections between detention and a toll road, elevated 10 feet above the ground. The detention basin incorporates native plants and steps to provide closer access.



PERSPECTIVE 4 - NEIGHBORHOOD PROMENADE AND CONNECTION

The viewpoint illustrates the neighborhood crossing on Maury. On-street parking and bike amenities can be included to facilitate convenient access to the community benefit site.



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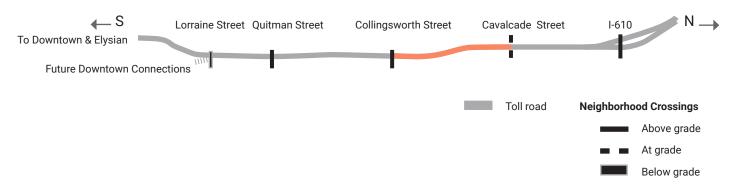
COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE

COLLINGSWORTH - CAVALCADE



COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE

COLLINGSWORTH - CAVALCADE



PROGRAMMING AT THIS COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE:

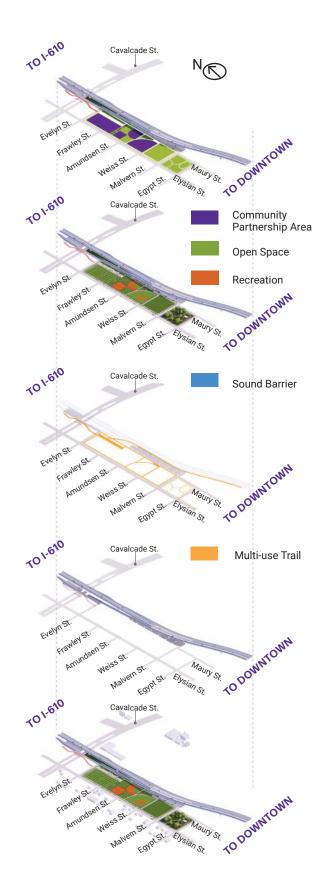
The Collingsworth to Cavalcade section of the corridor has remained a focal point of community discussions. Feedback from public meeting 1 showed a strong preference to a "community multipurpose center" replacing what was previously referred to as Detention Basin D. The development of a multipurpose center on this site is not within the scope for this round of design. However, the development of this site is still under discussion. The programming suggested on this site in this conceptual design proposal was chosen to reflect the future opportunities for this site.

THE ROADWAY AT THIS COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE:

At Collingsworth-Cavalcade the roadway can be elevated. Noise barriers can be placed on the roadway to mitigate noise in the community benefit site. Additional benefits such as parking can be provided under the roadway.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE

COLLINGSWORTH - CAVALCADE





Active Recreation Over 2.5 acres

Passive Recreation/ Gathering Over 2.5 acres

Parking Over 1.5 acres

Total Area Approximately 7.5 acres

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

Stormwater Detention In-Ground Option

Above Ground Cistern Storage Option Approximately 3.5 acre feet

Over 170 trees

Approximate Annual Carbon Sequestration: 369,160 Gallon

Vertical Green Columns Approximately 3,000 sq.ft.

Solar Panels Over 9,800 sq. ft. Approximate Annual Energy Generation: 180,000kWh

POTENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

Multi-use Trail Under 1 mile

All quantities are approximate and based on calculations and the conceptual design.



PERSPECTIVE 1 - SPORTS AREA/ COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AREA

A number of sport fields can be provided in this area including tennis courts, baseball fields, batting cages, and a soccer field. This rendering looks at the soccer field, batting cages, and tennis courts from the neighborhoods.



PERSPECTIVE 2 - SPORTS AREA/ COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AREA

The view captures the experience of individuals lingering on the interconnected multi-use trails that link the sports fields. The site furniture and landscaping can be designed to offer a delightful and enjoyable experience.

COLLINGSWORTH - CAVALCADE



PERSPECTIVE 3 - COMMUNITY GATHERING AREA

This view showcases the community gathering area. The landscape can incorporate raised beds to minimize the impact on groundwater. Additional shade structures can be introduced because of restrictions on tree planting in the TI zone.



PERSPECTIVE 4 - NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTION

The multi-use trail can be strategically designed to weave around and within the site, facilitating both on-site and neighborhood connections. Trees in this area are intentionally spaced to minimize groundwater impact. Despite this, various street furniture elements, including lighting and benches, can be provided to ensure a pleasant experience.

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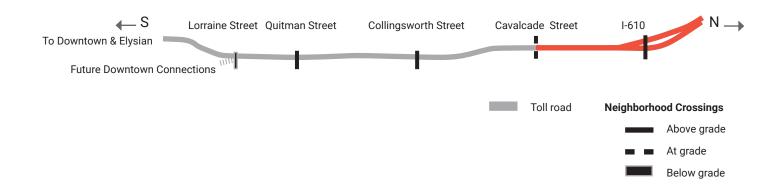
COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE

CAVALCADE - NORTH OF I-610



COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE

CAVALCADE - NORTH OF I-610



PROGRAMMING AT THIS COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE:

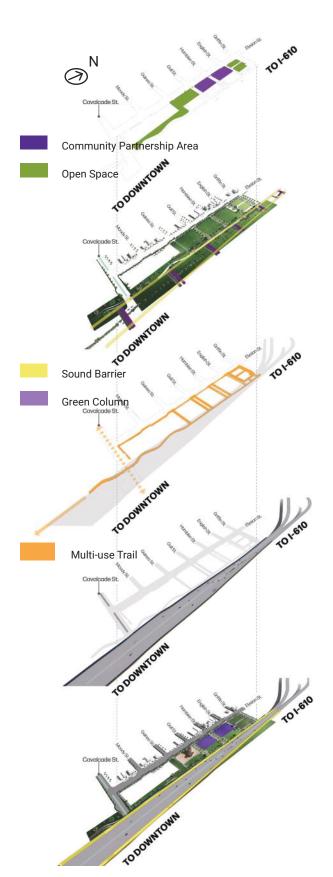
The section of the corridor from Cavalcade to north of I-610 proposes a consistently elevated conceptual roadway design that provides at grade crossing for pedestrian/bike connections. The possible use of decks can be added to the existing detention basins for additional programmable space.

THE ROADWAY AT THIS COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE:

At Cavalcade- I-610 the roadway is elevated. Noise barriers can be placed on the roadway to mitigate noise in the community benefit site. Additional benefits such as detention can be provided under the roadway.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE

CAVALCADE - NORTH OF I-610





Active Recreation Approximately 2 acres

Passive Recreation / Gathering Approximately 5 acres

Total Area Over 7 acres

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

Stormwater Detention North of I-610 Approximately 3 acre-feet I-610 to Cavalcade Approximately 6 acre-feet

Approximate Annual Carbon Sequestration: 369,160 Gallon

Vertical Green Columns Approximately 3,800 sq.ft.

Solar Panels Over 14,000 sq.ft.

Approximate Annual Energy Generation: 233,000 KWh

POTENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

Multi-use Trail Over 1 mile

All quantities are approximate and based on calculations and the conceptual design.



PERSPECTIVE 1 - PUBLIC ART AND COMMUNITY PAVILION

This perspective highlights the possible incorporation of public art into the site, featuring a sizable community pavilion designed for gatherings.



PERSPECTIVE 2 - NEIGHBORHOOD PROMENADE

MARCH 2024

The possible addition of a neighborhood promenade establishes connections between all detention basins and links to the proposed deck on each of them. Design elements can encompass wayfinding signage, lighting, trees, and benches.

CAVALCADE - NORTH OF I-610



PERSPECTIVE 3 - HARDY PEDESTRIAN / BIKE CONNECTOR

A proposed pedestrian/bike bridge at Cavalcade Street aims to enhance safety during crossing. The bridge can incorporate woody materials for the base and metal for the railings, offering a scenic view of the intersection and Detention Basin E.



PERSPECTIVE 4 - BIORETENTION

A bioretention area can be proposed beneath the roadway, seeking to mitigate stormwater impact and enhance visual aesthetics with the planting of native vegetation.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITE

CAVALCADE - NORTH OF I-610



PERSPECTIVE 5 - COMMUNITY DECK

The view emphasizes the possibility of a deck on top of the detention area, aiming to engage with natural features and generate extra space for community gatherings.



The view presents the possible revitalization of the area at Hardy Street and Caplin Street. The conceptual design maximizes the use of the existing green space, converting it into an appealing pocket park with signage, art installations, a multi-use trail, and enhanced landscaping. Moreover, the multi-use trail can seamlessly connect to the pre-existing bikeway on Kelly Street.



RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS



NEXT STEPS

This report texturizes what HCTRA has heard from the community. As these ideas are utilized to develop the design there are opportunities to activate currently owned HCTRA properties to benefit and develop the sites.

One potential method to engage the space and the community is through placemaking. The intent of placemaking is to temporarily activate an under utilized space. This can spark a conversation, as well as provide the community a glimpse of the benefits of adding amenities, art, and other public improvement features to a space.

The HCTRA-owned properties and detention basins are ideal locations to implement placemaking measures and for HCTRA to show intent and initiative for incorporating some of the key themes.



NEXT STEPS

PLACEMAKING FRAMEWORK

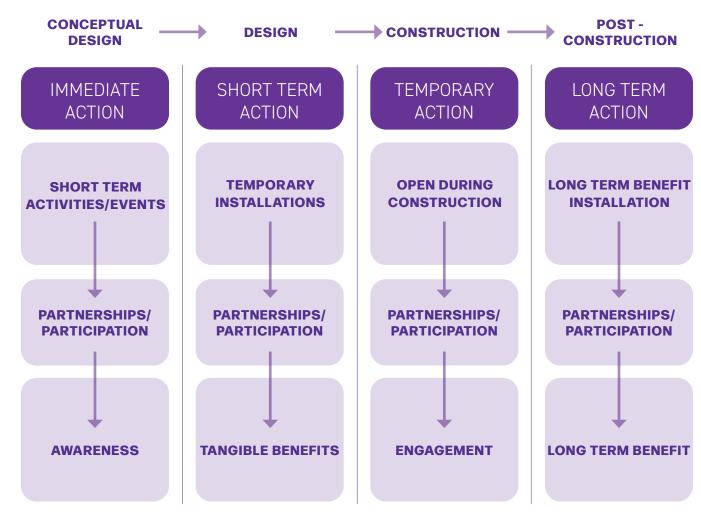
FRAMEWORK APPROACH

Placemaking is defined as the process of collectively re-imagining a space into a "place," a destination with an identity. These context-sensitive strategies inherently involve community members, local organizations, and local businesses to improve local spaces.

HCTRA may implement these strategies to maintain and strengthen existing relationships and demonstrate a continued commitment to the community. These strategies are temporary and budget friendly, intended to enhance HCTRA owned property along the corridor prior to, during, and after construction.

The diagram below shows the framework organization. Reading from left to right a range of actions are highlighted. Each stage of action may have different partners. Additionally each step has a different outcome leading to a more dynamic and engaged community.

With the wide range of sites in this project, this framework is designed to allow for flexibility and adaptation. While every site may not be applicable for the full range of placemaking activities, this framework allows for the weighing of different options and outcomes.



PLACEMAKING PRECEDENTS

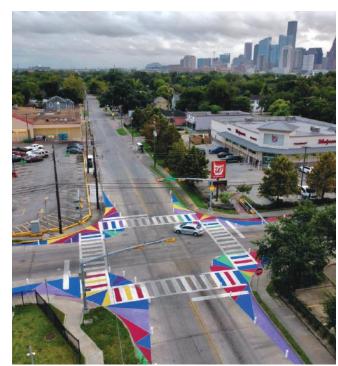
PLACEMAKING PRECEDENTS

The following images are placemaking initiatives that have been implemented in the City of Houston, as well as in other cities. The images show placemaking in the context of increasing visibility and safety for bike lanes and busy rightof-ways.

There are also examples of temporary art installations or organized group bike rides that can activate and garner attention to the community benefit areas and other key areas. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate the potential of how enhancement of the pedestrian or cycling experience can strengthen a place.



Intersection Painting at Hillcroft Avenue in Houston, TX Source: TEI Planning + Design



Creative curb extension at Fulton and Quitman Streets in Houston, TX installed by City of Houston Public Works and City of Houston Planning and Development Department. Source: @ChristofSpieler on X(Twitter)

NEXT STEPS

PLACEMAKING PRECEDENTS



Highway underpass art installation Source: University of Houston



Pop up bike lane activation for the Harrisburg Hike and Bike Trail in Houston, TX installed by the City of Houston Public Works and City of Houston Planning and Development Department. Source: Beaumont Enterprise



Coffee and Bikes group bike ride. Source: @moisessirias on Instagram.

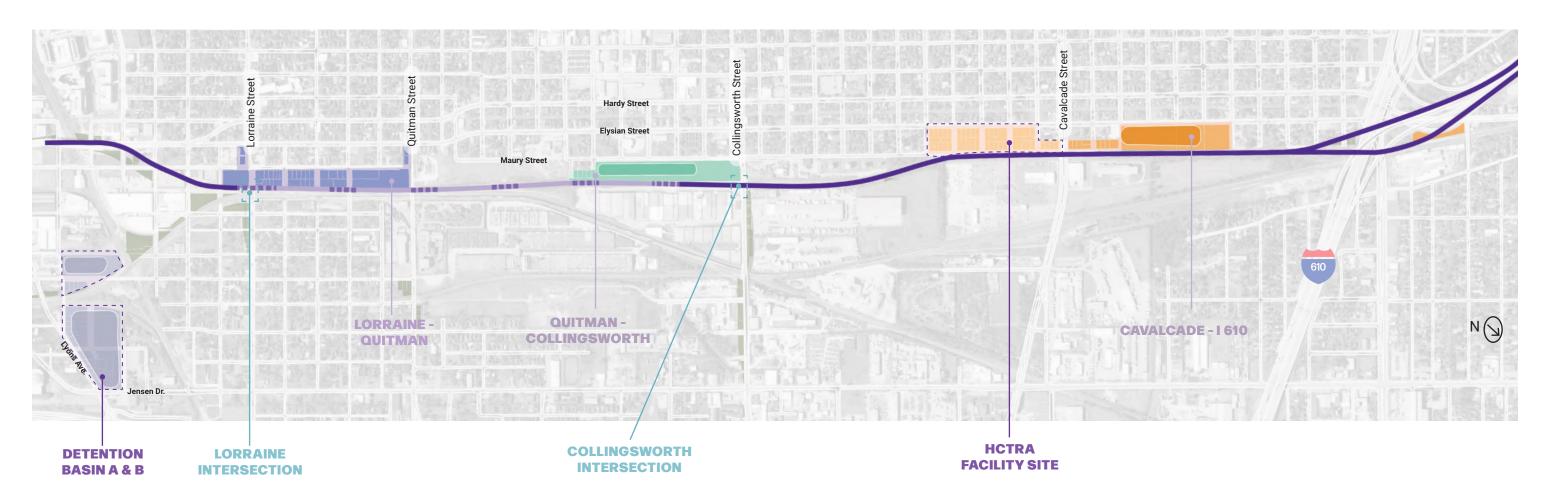
MARCH 2024



Pop up marketplace in East End Houston Source: East End Houston

POSSIBLE PLACEMAKING LOCATIONS

POSSIBLE PLACEMAKING LOCATIONS



Placemaking efforts should ideally engage the entire array of the sites throughout the corridor. However due to the variety of sites, existing construction, and community concerns, an interval approach may be necessary.

Based on current conditions the following sites have been identified for immediate action:

- Detention Basins A&B
- HCTRA Facility Site
- Lorraine Intersection
- Collingsworth Intersection

The other future community benefit sites should be re-evaluated for placemaking opportunities in the near future.

These sites can be further categorized into typical examples for:

Future Community Benefit Sites

These sites, such as Detention Basin A&B, and the HCTRA Facility site should be prioritized for a full range of placemaking activities including pre and post construction.

Existing Built Intersections

MARCH 2024

These sites, such as Lorraine and Collingsworth intersections, have completed construction. Placemaking efforts should call attention to these areas and generate activity.

The following pages show the placemaking framework applied to these types of site typology, with Detention Basin A&B as an example of a typical application for "future community benefit sites" and Lorraine and Quitman as examples of "existing built intersections."

PLACEMAKING FRAMEWORK

PLACEMAKING FRAMEWORK

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

DESIGN

CONSTRUCTION

POST-CONSTRUCTION

IMMEDIATE ACTION



This section outlines projects which HCTRA may immediately take action on, implement, or place. Such examples are temporary at the eventspecific level, meaning they can be set up and taken down at a moment's notice - they are not "installed." This could include: events centered around holidays or community celebrations. events that provide certain community services or giveaways, or temporary installments that build up community pride.

PARTNERSHIPS/PARTICIPATION

One of the goals for immediate action activities is to garner and maintain community interaction with HCTRA's efforts. Working with local, community organizations, as well as local TIRZ, Super Neighborhood, and/or Management District, is key in spreading the word and getting community members involved.

OUTCOMES

BASELINE

Build and/or maintain awareness of HCTRA's ongoing efforts for community benefit sites.

IDEAL

Gauge initial community momentum and buy-in regarding **HCTRA** community benefit sites and **Downtown Connector** Project.

SHORT TERM ACTION



Compared to immediate action, short-term action items are larger in scale, involving additional coordination and resulting in temporary installations that may be left in place until desired. These opportunities should be tied with supportive programming that will advertise HCTRA's role in their creation.

PARTNERSHIPS/PARTICIPATION

On top of maintaining relationships and partnerships with the organizations listed in Immediate Action, forming partnerships with various government agencies (i.e. City, County, etc.) is key for securing funding, permitting, etc.

OUTCOMES

BASELINE

Create visible/tangible community benefits, communicating **HCTRA's** investment into the community.

IDEAL

Build buy-in regarding long-term evolution of HCTRA community benefit sites.

TEMPORARY ACTION



The intent of temporary action items are to find ways to utilize the proposed spaces even during construction as a way to keep the community engaged and excited for what's to come. Activities or installations that serve to educate and keep the community engaged with the community benefit area.

PARTNERSHIPS/PARTICIPATION

Working with educational organizations, as well as all relations and partners established in the previous actions can help to keep people informed, engaged, and excited about what's to come.

OUTCOMES

BASELINE

Keep people engaged and informed on community benefit areas.

IDEAL

Build excitement for completion of construction.

LONG TERM ACTION



Long term action items involve regularly scheduled and/or maintained placemaking elements. These can be programmed activities or installed features of the community benefit areas. It is also important to note, under maintenance, there should be a component of action evaluation to ensure that the action is continuously aligned with the vision and/or community needs.

PARTNERSHIPS/PARTICIPATION

Forming partnerships with government agencies (i.e. City, County, etc.) serves to keep community benefit areas safe and well-managed/maintained. Partnerships with community organizations can help to keep people aware of and involved in site programming events, and potentially foster stewardship of the spaces.

OUTCOMES

BASELINE

The community benefit areas and related amenities are regularly used by community members.

IDEAL

Continued activation and management of community benefit sites, leading to continued community investment and good standing with local residents.

PLACEMAKING AT FUTURE COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITES

DETENTION BASIN A & B

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

DESIGN

SHORT TERM ACTION



- · Inaugural/kick off event
- Pop-up holiday event (Easter? Juneteenth?)
- · Community event focused on providing community needs/services(i.e. Thanksgiving turkey giveaway, back to school, taxes, mobile library)
- Temporary/event specific art ex: gateway/ entrance for Lyons Renaissance Festival, performances
- Bike ride, neighborhood tour, food tour, etc.

PARTNERSHIPS/PARTICIPATION

- Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church (church next to Detention Basin A)
- Fifth Ward CRC
- Fifth Ward Super Neighborhood
- Community organizations
 - · food bank, local non-profits
- Local businesses
 - Saint Arnold
- Art organizations/studios
 - · Houston Art Alliance, DeLuxe Theater, Meow Wolf, various artist studios/working spaces, Sanman Studios, Last Concert Cafe
- · City of Houston, Harris County, METRO, H-GAC
- TIRZ 18



- Temporary art (i.e. sculptures, lighting installments)
- Temporary space for events
- Temporary seating
- · Planting native species (could be tied to an event too)
- Branding for wayfinding/signage to place along corridor

PARTNERSHIPS/PARTICIPATION

- Arts organizations
 - · Houston Art Alliance, Meow Wolf, DeLuxe Theater
- City of Houston
 - · Planning, HPW, Mayors Office of Cultural Affairs
- Harris County
- Fifth Ward Super Neighborhood
- TIRZ 18
- Local businesses (Saint Arnold)
- Fifth Ward CRC
- AARP
 - Seating, accessibility components for senior citizens

NEXT STEPS

PLACEMAKING AT FUTURE COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITES

DETENTION BASIN A & B

CONSTRUCTION

POST-CONSTRUCTION

TEMPORARY ACTION



- Education event on wet-bottom detention or local ecology
- · Bike lane clean up event
- Road crossing at 59
- · Slip lanes and buffers on roadway between Lyons and 59

PARTNERSHIPS/PARTICIPATION

- Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church
- Environmental organizations
- Bike Houston
- 5th Ward CRC
- City of Houston Planning, HPW
- TxDOT
- TIRZ 18
- · Fifth Ward Super Neighborhood

LONG TERM ACTION



- · Regularly scheduled events
- Nature walks/walking group, exercise classes, movie nights, volunteer opportunities for landscaping/planting
- · Seasonal events in conjunction to holidays, local celebrations
- · Seasonal decoration + lighting

PARTNERSHIPS/PARTICIPATION

- · Precincts, management districts
- Environmental organizations

PLACEMAKING AT FUTURE COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITES

LORRAINE STREET

IMMEDIATE ACTION



- Clean up event at Lorraine
- Bike lane clean up
- Bike safety course

PARTNERSHIPS/PARTICIPATION

- City of Houston HPW, Planning, SW
- Bike Houston
- LINK Houston
- Near Northside MD
- · Near Northside Super Neighborhood
- TIRZ 21
- METRO

SHORT TERM ACTION



- Curb extension/intersection art at Lorraine
- Mural/art on Lorraine underpass
 - · Similar to Harrisburg and Navigation.

PARTNERSHIPS/PARTICIPATION

- City of Houston
 - · HPW, Planning, Mayors Office of Cultural Affairs
- · Local art organizations/artists
 - Arts Alliance, etc.
- State/national art orgs
 National Endowment for the Arts, Texas Commission on the Arts
- Local environmental/nature organizations
- Near Northside MD
- · Near Northside Super Neighborhood
- TIRZ 21
- METRO

NEXT STEPS

PLACEMAKING AT FUTURE COMMUNITY BENEFIT SITES

COLLINGSWORTH STREET

IMMEDIATE ACTION



- Clean up event at Collingsworth
- Bike lane clean up

PARTNERSHIPS/PARTICIPATION

- · City of Houston
 - HPW, Planning, SW
- Bike Houston
- LINK Houston
- Near Northside MD
- · Near Northside Super Neighborhood
- TIRZ 21
- METRO

SHORT TERM ACTION



- · Curb extension/intersection art at Collingsworth
- Mural/art on under Collingsworth
- Monthly/regularly programmed market
 Food trucks, local business, etc
- Native planting/flowers at Collingsworth intersection

PARTNERSHIPS/PARTICIPATION

- City of Houston
 - HPW, Planning, Mayors Office of Cultural Affairs
- Local art organizations/artists
 - · Arts Alliance, etc.
- State/national art orgs
 - National Endowment for the Arts, Texas Commission on the Arts
- Local environmental/nature organizations
- Near Northside MD
- · Near Northside Super Neighborhood
- TIRZ 21
- METRO



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE HARDY DOWNTOWN CONNECTOR:

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