



LIVABLE CENTERS STUDY
PREPARED BY ASAKURA ROBINSON
WITH: GOLDER & ASSOCIATES

inside cover

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Kashmere Gardens is a community poised for change - as a historic community situated inside the I-610 loop and near Downtown Houston, it is an area that is likely to see increased investment over the next ten years. This Kashmere Gardens Livable Centers Study focuses on helping the Near Northside Management District and other local stakeholders to direct that change so that it addresses community needs and benefits existing residents, as well as creating an inviting environment for new residents, visitors, employees, businesses, and consumers.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES

The Livable Centers program facilitates the creation of walkable, mixed-use places that provide multimodal transportation options, improve environmental quality, and promote economic development. Livable Centers studies also advance the six HUD livability principles, including:

- Provide more transportation choices.
- Promote equitable, affordable housing.
- Enhance economic competitiveness.
- Support existing communities.
- Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.
- Value communities and neighborhoods.

CREATING AN ACTION PLAN

The Executive Summary focuses on the recommendations from the study that were prioritized by Kashmere Gardens residents and stakeholders as the highest priority issues for the Management District and its local partners to take on in the short term. These recommendations form an implementable "Action Plan" that will help further livability in Kashmere Gardens.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Kashmere Gardens is a historically African-American community that is situated inside the I-610 loop, northeast of Downtown Houston. The area is predominantly residential, with a significant number of vacant properties and a relatively small number of retail and commercial assets. In response to the need to plan for inclusive development in the Kashmere Gardens area, the Near Northside Management District (NNMD) was established in 2011 to promote, develop, encourage, and maintain employment, commerce, transportation, housing, tourism, recreation, the arts, entertainment, economic development, safety, and the public welfare.

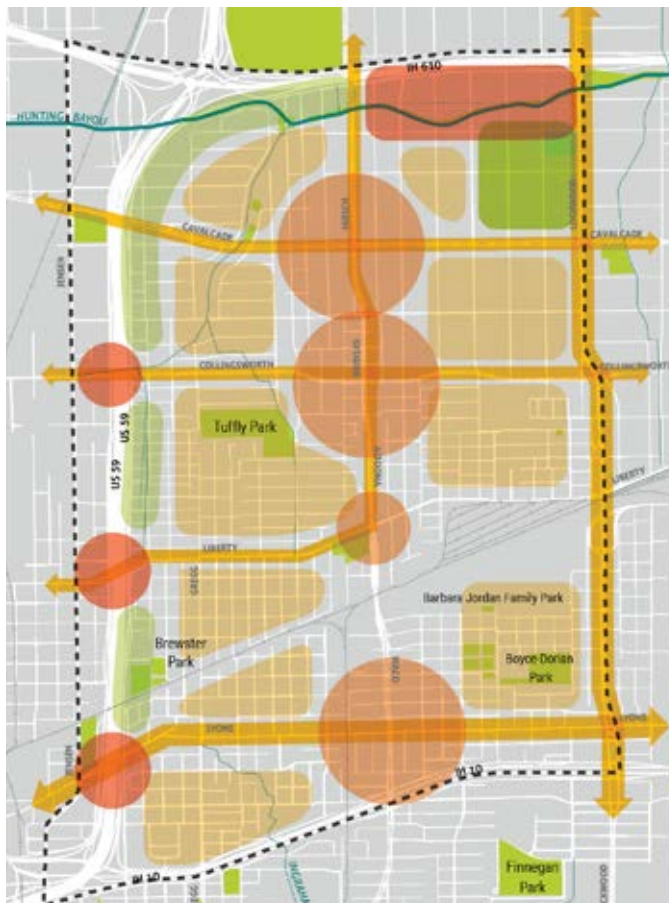
This Livable Centers Study will assist the NNMD to establish a forward-looking strategy to partner with local residents, employees, stakeholder organizations, public agencies, and businesses to promote quality of life and advance the Livable Centers goals in the Kashmere Gardens area. The following goals, in no particular order, for the Livable Centers Study were developed by the project team in collaboration with community members and project stakeholders:

- 1 ENSURE THAT THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS FROM NEW INVESTMENT**
Restoring existing and creating new development is necessary to increase the value of the community and attract businesses to the area, but strategies should ensure that existing residents benefit.
- 2 INCREASE HIGH-QUALITY HOUSING OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS OF ALL INCOME LEVELS**
Fair housing choices and affordability strategies aim to restore existing housing conditions, redevelop vacant properties, provide additional housing options for mixed income residents, implement workforce housing, as well as retain and maintain a stock of affordable housing for vulnerable residents.
- 3 LEVERAGE OPPORTUNITIES CREATED BY EXISTING LARGE INFRASTRUCTURE**
Infrastructure addresses the structures and systems (i.e. buildings, railroads, highways) needed to help a community function properly. By examining how these can work together to catalyze investment for the community, it will ultimately serve their personal and economic needs.
- 4 ALIGN CITYWIDE PLANS WITH THE COMMUNITY'S GOALS**
At the local level, city wide plans can present opportunities and challenges to communities. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on how the study area can use these efforts to their advantage.
- 5 OPTIMIZE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS AND AWARENESS**
By understanding the environmental challenges and assets of a community, this knowledge can be used as a tool to implement preventative measures that increase the power of the individuals, families and natural ecosystems in the area, while maximizing the overall longevity of the community.
- 6 SUPPORT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP**
Supporting workforce development and local entrepreneurship is essential to enhancing the economic stability of the people within the study area. By looking at the job opportunities and needs of the community, investment can be targeted.
- 7 PROMOTE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**
Knowledge of environmental health is essential to the livelihood of those living in the study area. Members of the community should have reasonable transportation access to necessary healthcare services, which can aid in reducing health disparities.
- 8 BUILD THE CAPACITY OF THE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT**
By examining the Near Northside Management District's ability to allocate funding towards projects that enhance the living conditions of the community, and create and promote new economic development, the residents remain the beneficiaries.

CALL TO ACTION - PLAN PRIORITIES

1.1 CREATE AN OVERALL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY TO INFORM PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT

With a convenient location near Downtown Houston, Kashmere Gardens is likely to face long-term market change and appreciation in value. Residents and stakeholders are very clear that they want to leverage this long-term change to benefit existing and future residents, while also focusing on meeting immediate needs for food access, retail development, and high-quality housing options. The Near Northside Management District is ideally situated to define and maintain a development strategy for Kashmere Gardens that can bring together community stakeholders with the public and private sector to meet these goals. During the community engagement process, residents and stakeholders expressed agreement about the following key development opportunity areas that form the foundation of a vision for Kashmere Gardens' future.



LIVING

CREATE AND PRESERVE COMMUNITIES THAT PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING, INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS, AND QUALITY EDUCATION



WORKING

TO ENHANCE REGIONAL ECONOMIC PROSPERITY THROUGH JOBS, TRAINING AND EDUCATION ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO RETAIN AND ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES



MOVING

TO PROMOTE INCREASING AND IMPROVING MOVEMENT AROUND THE REGION USING PUBLIC TRANSIT, ELECTRIC CARS, AND ENCOURAGING WALKING AND BICYCLING TO ACHIEVE BETTER PHYSICAL WELL-BEING



THRIVING

TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES THAT PROVIDE ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS, ARTS, RECREATION, AND ENTERTAINMENT, WHICH MAKE US HAPPY AND FEEL MEANINGFUL THROUGH ACTIVE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

CALL TO ACTION - PLAN PRIORITIES

2.1 ATTRACT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING TO JUMP START THE HOUSING MARKET

As an affordable community close to Houston’s downtown and within the I-610 loop, Kashmere Gardens is an area that is primed to attract private-sector resources in the next five to ten years. Channeling these resources toward an inclusive development strategy requires thinking ahead to ensure that existing residents can remain in the area and benefit from change, and that new development reflects the community’s character and vision. The Near Northside Management District can play a critical role in leveraging public-sector and non-profit resources to speed up the attraction of private-sector capital that fulfills community priorities, such as quality mixed-use development and new single-family housing options – while also planning for the future to help existing residents stay in place through innovative home repair and savings programs.

FUNDING HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT FOR KASHMERE GARDENS



FUNDING GRAPHIC SHOWING PARTNERS WHO CAN HELP BRING HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT TO KASHMERE GARDENS AT PRICES AFFORDABLE TO WORKING FAMILIES, AND AT CONSTRUCTION COSTS THAT ARE FEASIBLE WITHIN THE AREA’S MARKET.

2.2 DEVELOP A COMMUNITY-BASED HOME REPAIR PROGRAM AND DIRECT RESIDENTS TO CITY HOME REPAIR RESOURCES

The Kashmere Gardens area has many homes that date to the 1940s and 1950s; these older homes often need repairs to address a range of issues, and elderly residents may not have the resources or mobility to upkeep their properties as they once did. A community-based home repair program modeled on the "Rebuilding Northside Together" partnership can address smaller repairs, such as painting, siding, and modifications for aging in place like ramps and grab bars. For larger repair issues, the NNMD should keep up with City home repair programs and ensure residents are aware of opportunities to apply for funding from the City, as addressing housing quality is a major current focus of the Department of Housing and Community Development.



A STRONG PRECEDENT: "REBUILDING NORTHSIDE TOGETHER" HOME REPAIR PROGRAM OPERATED BY AVENUE CDC AND REBUILDING TOGETHER HOUSTON.

IMAGE CREDIT: GO NEIGHBORHOODS

CALL TO ACTION - PLAN PRIORITIES

3.1 DESIGNATE GATEWAYS TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD. IDENTIFY SITES FOR RETAIL AND DEVELOP A PUBLIC REALM URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

Public investments in a neighborhood's built environment can produce a range of positive impacts, such as new, private-sector residential and commercial investment, and improved public safety. Examples include redesigning and rebuilding streets, upgrading sidewalks, and adding signage and street lights. Given the high expense of these types of improvements, however, it is useful to concentrate them in strategic locations where public investment is most likely to stimulate private reinvestment in the neighborhood, such as home building and renovation, and business growth. Strategic areas are those with the most automobile and foot-traffic – which attracts retailers – existing anchors and institutions, and gateways to adjacent neighborhoods.



CONCEPT FOR A REDESIGNED COLLINGSWORTH STREET AT THE US 59 FRONTAGE ROAD WITH IMPROVED GATEWAYS

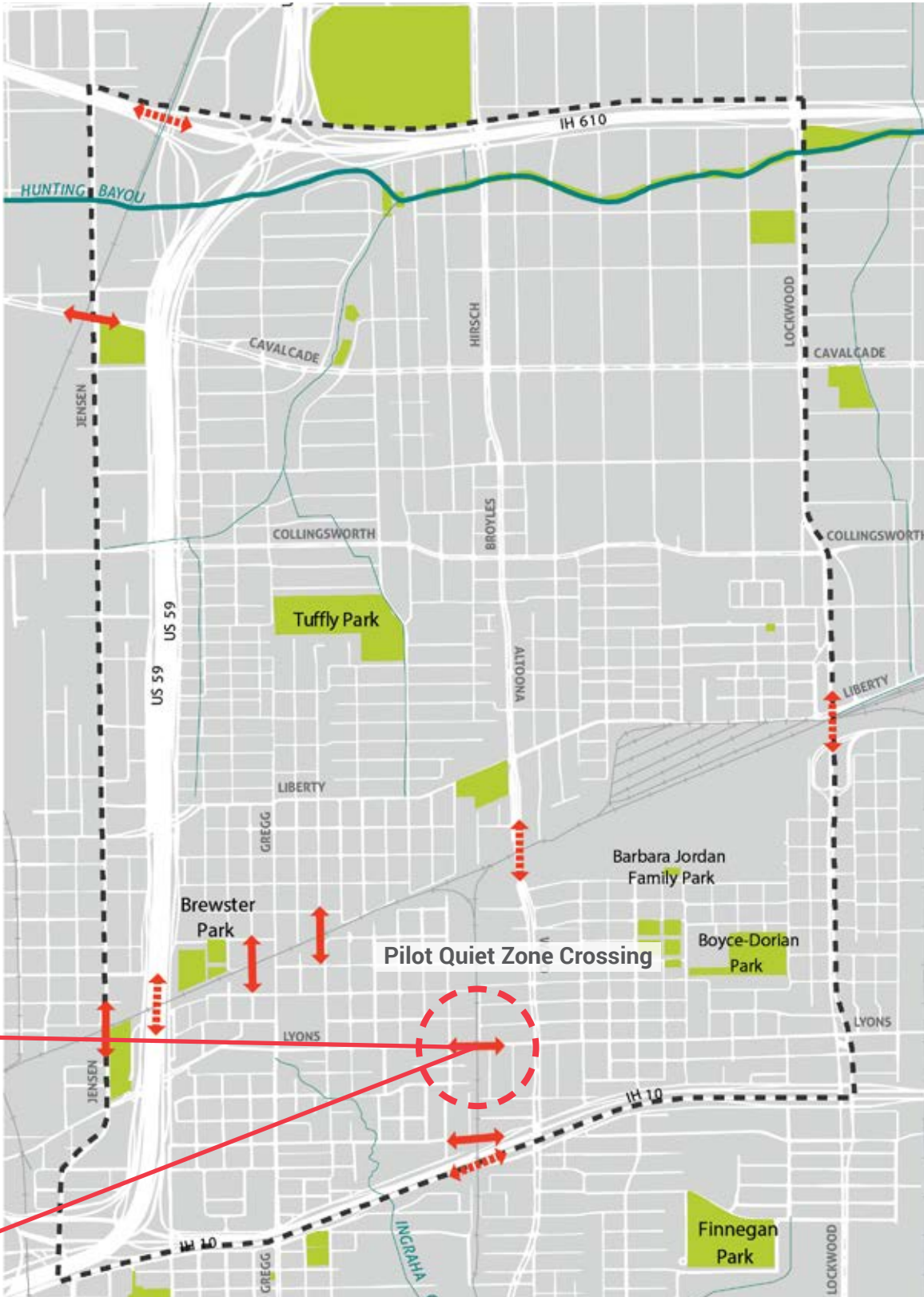
3.2 IDENTIFY RAILROAD CROSSINGS FOR QUIET ZONES AND SEPARATED GRADE CROSSINGS

Rail crossings within the Near Northside Management District have varying degrees of adequacies and inadequacies. There are two vehicular bridges over each end of the Englewood Yard Union Pacific Railroad Terminal. The portion of the terminal within the district represents just the tail end of the terminal. The major area of the terminal is approximately three times the size of the tail and is located to the east of the district. Additionally, Englewood Terminal operates 24 hours a day causing extended traffic delays at railroad crossings and affecting homes and businesses near railroad tracks with train horns that can be loud distractions during the day and interrupt sleep at night. Where vehicular crossings can not be accommodated, alternative locations for bicycle or pedestrian crossings should be examined.



EXAMPLE OF A QUIET ZONE RAILWAY CROSSING. IMAGE CREDIT: ELK RIVER STAR





Solid arrows represent at-grade crossings, dotted arrows are elevated crossings.

CALL TO ACTION - PLAN PRIORITIES

4.1 PILOT METRO COMMUNITY CONNECTOR

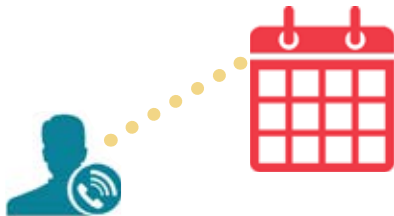
Due to the lack of job, retail and services within the neighborhood, Kashmere Gardens residents must commute outside the neighborhood to access them. However, across Houston, neighborhoods that have lost population and jobs, such as Kashmere Gardens, have seen reduced levels of fixed-route bus service. This means residents without personal vehicles face longer, less frequent trips to destinations outside the neighborhood. In response to this inconvenience, Metro has introduced Community Connector to select neighborhoods. Community Connector is a "demand-response" service that operates within four-to-five square mile zones within Metro's overall service area.

HOW DO I CATCH THE BUS?

Call when you need a ride



Schedule for the same time of the day or week



WHERE CAN IT TAKE ME?

Any destination within the service area



One of two transit centers



To transfer to the express bus to downtown



5.1 ADDRESS SOIL CONTAMINATION NEAR LIBERTY ROAD

There are numerous known environmental issues in Kashmere Gardens that have the potential to create health problems and complicate investment and development. These issues within the district include: three known brownfield sites (which have been given to the City by LARA); Hunting Bayou's water quality is rated by EPA as 'Impaired'; three nearby Superfund sites; nonpoint sources of pollution from trash and dumping; and air quality does not meet the national ambient air quality standards for ground level ozone.

6.1

EXPAND JOB RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS THROUGH LOCAL HIRING PROGRAMS WITH CORPORATIONS THAT HAVE WORKFORCE NEEDS NEARBY, AND IN PARTNERSHIP WITH KASHMERE HIGH SCHOOL'S STEM MAGNET PROGRAM.

Kashmere Gardens residents could benefit from the expansion of jobs recruitment programs, increased job training and programs that take advantage of close proximity to industrial commercial activity. Programs to take advantage of include:

Scholarships from the Black Employee Network of Union Pacific: a scholarship awarded to assist African American Students in defraying the cost of higher education. Recipients are chosen on the basis of scholastic ability and leadership.

Union Pacific Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM): Programs in select areas of the country that are continually evolving and refining their strategy to attract and retain the best millennial STEM talent.

Kashmere Garden Specific Programs: In addition to existing programs, the Management District should partner with local organizations to develop neighborhood-specific programs.



STUDENTS AND EMPLOYERS AT A "JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT" CAREER FAIR IN HOUSTON.

IMAGE CREDIT: PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS

7.1

ENSURE PRIMARY, DENTAL, MENTAL, AND WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE

The management district should work with the Kashmere Gardens Multi-Service Center (MSC) to help fund and support regular community outreach and formalize a partnership with a reputable non-profit in order to assist in enacting community literacy programs at the center.



Outreach is needed to promote healthy activities taking place at the Multi-Service Center. (Image: neighborhood-centers.org)

CALL TO ACTION - PLAN PRIORITIES

8.1 DEVELOP AN INITIAL WORK PLAN FOR THE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

The Management District should develop a two- to three-year startup workplan that defines strategies, proposes programs and projects, and outlines staffing and budget proposals in order to achieve community priorities. Upon successful completion of the two- to three-year plan, the Management District may elect to adopt a longer-term plan that reflects lessons learned, additional priorities, and funding projections for a 10-15 year timeframe.



New development should be guided by a development strategy to ensure compatibility with existing buildings and an active street life. (Image: Culturemap)



A work plan that addresses cleanup programs and other community initiatives should be created. (Image: ABC 13)




Placemaking strategies such as branding and street signs would help designate Kashmere Gardens as a unique place.





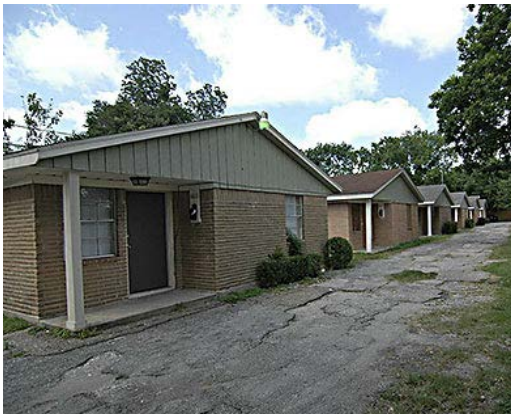
INTRODUCTION



Kashmere Gardens is a historically African-American community that is situated inside the I-610 loop, northeast of Downtown Houston. The area is predominantly residential, with a significant number of vacant properties and a relatively small number of retail and commercial assets. In response to the need to plan for inclusive development in the Kashmere Gardens area, the Near Northside Management District (NNMD) was established in 2011 to promote, develop, encourage, and maintain employment, commerce, transportation, housing, tourism, recreation, the arts, entertainment, economic development, safety, and the public welfare.

This Livable Centers Study will assist the NNMD to establish a forward-looking strategy to partner with local residents, employees, stakeholder organizations, public agencies, and businesses to promote quality of life and advance the Livable Centers goals in the Kashmere Gardens area. The Livable Centers program facilitates the creation of walkable, mixed-use places that provide multimodal transportation options, improve environmental quality, and promote economic development. Livable Centers studies also advance the six HUD livability principles, including:

- Provide more transportation choices.
- Promote equitable, affordable housing.
- Enhance economic competitiveness.
- Support existing communities.
- Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.
- Value communities and neighborhoods.



Kashmere Gardens is largely residential, with limited commercial development.

Funding for the Livable Centers Program is allocated through H-GAC's Transportation Improvement Program, which funds 80% of the project with federal funds and requires a 20% local match. The NNMD is the local partner for this Livable Centers Study. Additional public-sector entities, including the City of Houston and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), were invaluable stakeholders throughout the planning process.

STUDY AREA

The Kashmere Gardens Livable Centers study area is bounded by I-610 to the north, Jensen Drive to the west, I-10 to the south, and Lockwood Drive to the east; it contains portions of the Kashmere Gardens superneighborhood (Superneighborhood 52) and the Greater Fifth Ward superneighborhood (Superneighborhood 55).



- LEGEND
- Study Area
 - Physical barrier
 - Railroad
 - Vacancy
 - Commercial use
 - Commercial corridor

NEAR NORTHSIDE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT MISSION

In conducting this study, the team was guided by the NNMD's founding statutes and bylaws in order to define the priorities and capacities of the study's core local partner. The NNMD furthers the public interest by:

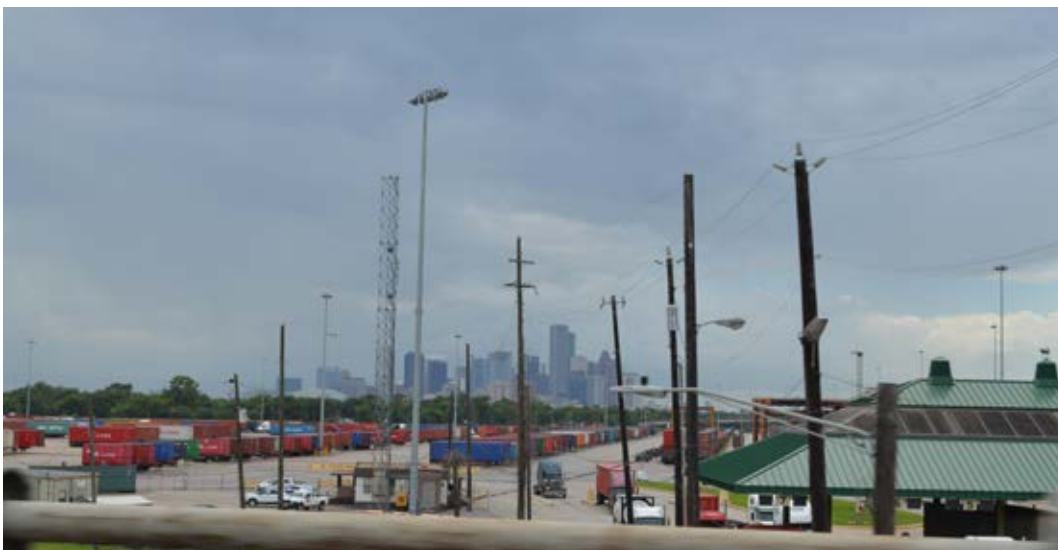
- Developing and diversifying the economy of the state [of Texas]
- Eliminating unemployment and underemployment
- Developing and expanding transportation and commerce.

Specific areas of action indicated in the NNMD's founding documents include:

- Promoting the health, safety, and general welfare of residents, employers, employees, visitors, and consumers in the district, and of the public;
- Providing needed funding for the district to preserve, maintain, and enhance the economic health and vitality of the district territory as a community and business center
- Promoting the health, safety, welfare, and enjoyment of the public by providing pedestrian ways and by landscaping and developing certain areas in the district, which are necessary for the restoration, preservation, and enhancement of scenic beauty.

OUTREACH

The study engaged area residents, government agencies, local employers, and institutions to develop recommendations and priorities for improvement. Three public meetings were held to gather feedback and define priorities throughout the planning process, and an Advisory Committee including representatives from the NNMD, H-GAC, City of Houston, TxDOT, ProUnitas, Harris County, religious leaders and community members provided additional feedback on concepts and recommendations. Based on input from the public and stakeholders, the project team developed the following specific goals for the Kashmere Gardens Livable Centers Plan. These goals run throughout this report and define the existing conditions analysis categories, recommendations, and implementation strategies.



Kashmere Gardens is located northeast of downtown and is home to a large railroad operation.

PROJECT GOALS

- Ensure that the Community Benefits from New Investment
- Increase High-Quality Housing Options for Residents of All Income Levels
- Leverage Opportunities Created by Existing Large Infrastructure
- Align Citywide Plans with the Community's Goals
- Optimize Environmental Assets and Awareness
- Support Workforce Development and Community Entrepreneurship
- Promote Healthy Communities
- Build the Capacity of the Management District


PROJECT TIMELINE

The project was completed in a nine-month period and consisted of four phases: Needs Assessment; Conceptual Plan; Design Development; and Implementation Strategy. During this period, three public meetings and three Advisory Committee meetings were held, among other engagement efforts.

	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
TASK 1 NEEDS ASSESSMENT									
TASK 2 CONCEPT PLAN									
TASK 3 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT									
TASK 4 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY									
TASK 5 ENGAGEMENT									
Stakeholder Advisory Committee			1		2		3		
Public Meetings			1			2		3	



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



The ability of the community to participate in the development of a plan is one of the essential components to creating a strong, implementable plan. As such, a diligent effort was made to reach and gain substantive input from the community throughout the project.

GOING WHERE PEOPLE ARE

After initial efforts to engage the community were less successful than hoped, our team focused on bringing the study to existing groups in order to share the study with community members and gain feedback and buy in. The Kashmere Gardens Superneighborhood meetings were especially helpful in this regard.

INTERVIEWING STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to discussions with community members, our team conducted interviews with more than a dozen organizations, agencies and individuals who have an ability to make an impact on the community.

PROJECT GOALS

Our project team emphasized substantive and inclusive public engagement throughout the planning process in order to ensure buy-in from local residents, employees, employers, and public agencies. In order to create an open and informative process and ensure future implementation, our team, with assistance from the NNMD, held three public meetings at the Kashmere Multi-Service Center during the existing conditions phase, the conceptual design phase, and the implementation phase of the Kashmere Gardens Livable Centers study.

Throughout the engagement process, we utilized the eight project goals to frame community discussions and help residents and participants focus on the topics that were most important to them. At each of the three meetings, our team deepened the level of engagement on these topics, from enumerating existing assets and challenges with residents, to prioritizing strategies through a voting process, to receiving comments about a proposed Action Plan of top-priority items. These project goals and community participants' feedback are reflected within the conceptual and implementation plans.

In approaching the existing conditions analysis, the following eight goals were explored in order to frame the opportunities and challenges that would be reflected in the final recommendations of the study. These subject areas were used to organize the initial community engagement efforts, allowing individuals to focus their feedback in areas that were most important to them, and are later reflected in the conceptual plan, where there is overlap between subject areas.

The subject areas and their descriptions are listed to the right, in no particular order.

1	<p>ENSURE THAT THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS FROM NEW INVESTMENT</p> <p>Restoring existing and creating new development is necessary to increase the value of the community and attract businesses to the area, but strategies should ensure that existing residents benefit.</p>
2	<p>INCREASE HIGH-QUALITY HOUSING OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS OF ALL INCOME LEVELS</p> <p>Fair housing choices and affordability strategies aim to restore existing housing conditions, redevelop vacant properties, provide additional housing options for mixed income residents, implement workforce housing, as well as retain and maintain a stock of affordable housing for vulnerable residents.</p>
3	<p>LEVERAGE OPPORTUNITIES CREATED BY EXISTING LARGE INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p>Infrastructure addresses the structures and systems (i.e. buildings, railroads, highways) needed to help a community function properly. By examining how these can work together to catalyze investment for the community, it will ultimately serve their personal and economic needs.</p>
4	<p>ALIGN CITYWIDE PLANS WITH THE COMMUNITY'S GOALS</p> <p>At the local level, city wide plans can present opportunities and challenges to communities. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on how the study area can use these efforts to their advantage.</p>
5	<p>OPTIMIZE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS AND AWARENESS</p> <p>By understanding the environmental challenges and assets of a community, this knowledge can be used as a tool to implement preventative measures that increase the power of the individuals, families and natural ecosystems in the area, while maximizing the overall longevity of the community.</p>
6	<p>SUPPORT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP</p> <p>Supporting workforce development and local entrepreneurship is essential to enhancing the economic stability of the people within the study area. By looking at the job opportunities and needs of the community, investment can be targeted.</p>
7	<p>PROMOTE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES</p> <p>Knowledge of environmental health is essential to the livelihood of those living in the study area. Members of the community should have reasonable transportation access to necessary healthcare services, which can aid in reducing health disparities.</p>
8	<p>BUILD THE CAPACITY OF THE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT</p> <p>By examining the Near Northside Management District's ability to allocate funding towards projects that enhance the living conditions of the community, and create and promote new economic development, the residents remain the beneficiaries.</p>

FIRST PUBLIC MEETING

The first public meeting occurred at the end of the existing conditions phase of the project. It was designed to:

- Inform community members about the Livable Centers study goals, timeline, and outcomes
- Present preliminary findings from the Existing Conditions analysis for comment by the public
- Gather community reactions to the proposed project goals and identify areas where the goals should be revised to better reflect local priorities
- Understand community assets, problems to address, and initial priorities from participants for the study

The public meeting included a presentation with group question and answer time, followed by table-based breakouts that each included a table activity based on the project goals, including enumerating local business assets and needs, discussing priorities for housing choice in the community, identifying environmental and safety issues, and selecting priorities for Management District investment.

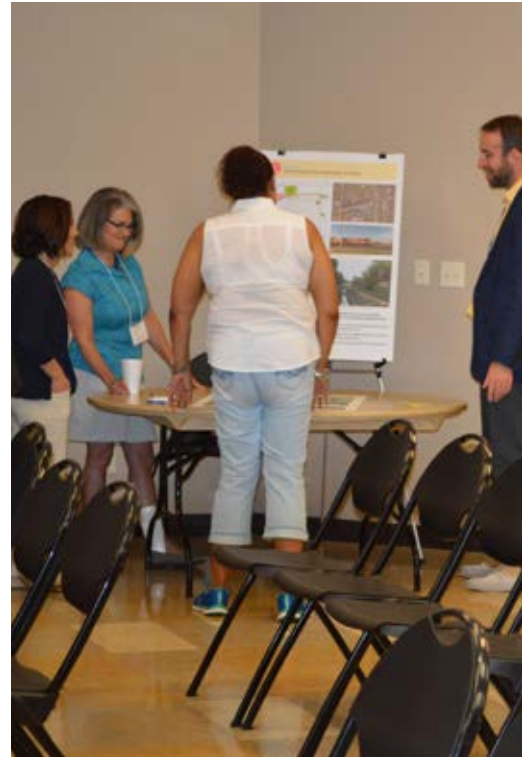
One particular activity that generated strong responses was the Money Game, which was designed to identify Management District priorities. This table breakout game

allotted community participants \$100 in faux "money" to allocate among seven boxes that represented core areas of the NNMD's activity. These core areas were: capital projects, code enforcement, economic development, community programs, litter removal, public safety, and graffiti removal.

Participants were asked to place money in the boxes that they prioritized as being the most important to them, revealing where they believed the management district's money should go. The results were as follows:

- Public Safety=\$185
- Code Enforcement=\$140
- Economic Development=\$120
- Community Programs=\$100
- Capital Projects=\$75
- Litter Removal=\$55
- Graffiti Removal=\$25

Public Safety and Code Enforcement were higher priorities for most residents, with Economic Development running a close third. Overall, many residents felt that some of the categories should be discussed more creatively, such as turning funds for graffiti abatement into a visual arts program that would help youth direct their energies toward murals, careers in art, and other beneficial outcomes for the community.



The first public meeting informed the public about the project and gather reactions to proposed goals and to understand community assets and problems.

SECOND PUBLIC MEETING

The second public meeting occurred during development of the Conceptual Plan and focused on gaining participants' feedback on specific strategies that the project team proposed to further each goal. After a presentation that outlined each strategy and the basis for including it within the draft recommendations, the team provided participants with "prioritization worksheets" that asked residents to select their top five priorities out of all the strategies that were proposed. The prioritization indicated by community votes formed the basis for the Action Plan of top-priority recommendations enumerated in this report.

The team also worked during the second meeting to ensure that participants had access to additional resources that reflected community interests from the first public meeting. The team provided participants with a home repair resources handout that directed residents to available resources from the City and local non-profit Rebuilding Together; representatives of local community development corporation HAUCDC, and their parent organization the Urban League, also attended to discuss the role of CDCs in revitalizing the neighborhood.



The Second Public Meeting. (Image credit: Mary Remar) focused on draft recommendations and the community's priorities.

Kashmere Gardens

Livable Centers Study

Prioritization Worksheet:
 It is vital to use the resources of the management district efficiently and focus on the issues that are most important to the Kashmere Gardens Community. **Please circle the red numbers for the top five recommendations that you would like to prioritize.** If you have any additional comments, feel free to leave them in the space on the right.

Goal 1: Ensure that the Community Benefits from New Investment	
1.1	Create an overall development strategy to inform public and private investment
1.2	Adopt Complete Communities principles
Goal 2: Increase High Quality Housing Options for Residents of All Income Levels	
2.1	Attract public and private funding to jump start the housing market
2.2	Increase community development corporation (CDC) presence and capacity
2.3	Develop a community-based home repair program
2.4	Develop a resilient housing strategy for areas within the 100-year floodplain
Goal 3: Leverage Opportunities Created by Existing Large Infrastructure	
3.1	Designate gateways to the neighborhood, identify sites for new retail and develop a public realm urban design strategy
3.2	High-rise major thoroughfares and continue neighborhood street improvements
3.3	Identify railroad crossings for quiet zones and separated grade crossings
3.4	Improve the community's relationship with the railways, with a focus on safety and transportation programs in schools
3.5	Coordinate with Project Hunting and facilitate communication with the community. Specific emphasis should be placed on permanent and temporary bridge closures
Goal 4: Align Citywide Plans with the Community's Goals	
4.1	Place METRO Community Connector
4.2	Build Bikeways proposed in the Houston Bike Plan
4.3	Address areas of high park need according to the Houston Parks Plan

THIRD PUBLIC MEETING

At the third public meeting, participants heard about a proposed Action Plan comprised of the top-priority strategies from the second public meeting. The project team gave a presentation, after which participants were invited to discuss the Action Plan in breakout areas including detailed boards describing each recommendation.



The third public meeting introduced the action plan and included discussion of the next steps.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The project Advisory Committee played a key role throughout the project in shaping the project team's recommendations. Representatives from the NNMD, H-GAC, City of Houston, TxDOT, ProUnitas, Harris County, religious leaders and community members formed the Advisory Committee. The Committee met before each of the three public meetings to help shape the content for the meetings, vet potential goals and recommendations, and provide information on local resources and partners that the team should contact.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

The purpose of existing conditions analysis is to assess community needs and identify areas where the plan's recommendations can help create a livable community with strong opportunity for residents, employees, employers, and visitors to flourish.

Analyzing existing challenges and opportunities that Kashmere Gardens faces allows the planning team to optimize the effectiveness of the Near North Management District and its partners in enhancing local quality of life. As discussed in the Public Engagement section, eight subject areas were explored within the existing conditions research. These are:

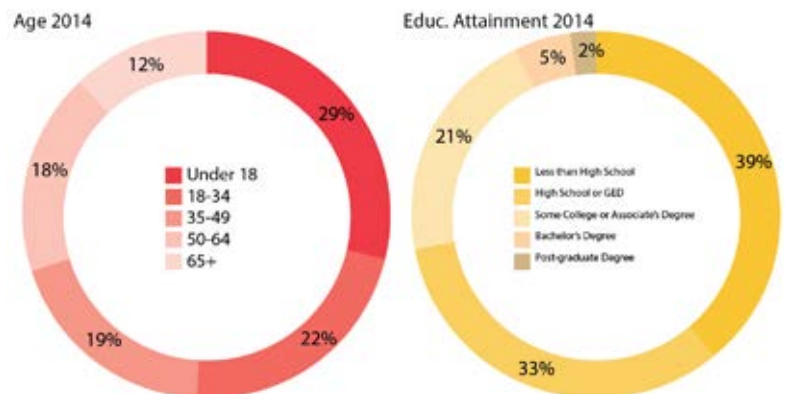
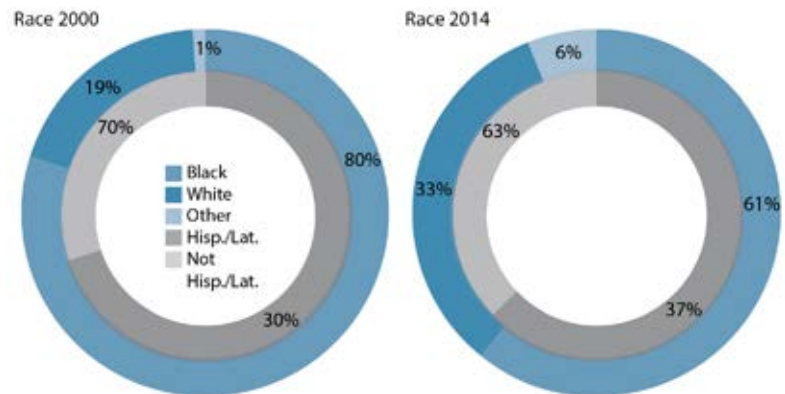
- Ensure that the Community Benefits from New Investment
- Increase High-Quality Housing Options for Residents of All Income Levels
- Leverage Opportunities Created by Existing Large Infrastructure
- Align Citywide Plans with the Community's Goals
- Optimize Environmental Assets and Awareness
- Support Workforce Development and Community Entrepreneurship
- Promote Healthy Communities;
- Build the Capacity of the Management District

1: BENEFIT FROM NEW INVESTMENT

RESTORING EXISTING AND CREATING NEW DEVELOPMENT IS NECESSARY TO INCREASE PROPERTY VALUE IN THE COMMUNITY AND ATTRACT BUSINESSES TO THE AREA, BUT STRATEGIES SHOULD ENSURE THAT EXISTING RESIDENTS BENEFIT.

KEY FINDINGS

- On average, neighborhood residents are younger, have lower levels of educational attainment, and lower income than residents citywide.
- The neighborhood has deep cultural roots and is historically an African-American community, though the Latino population has grown in recent years.
- The housing and commercial real estate markets are weak compared to other neighborhoods in the city, making market-based investment more difficult.



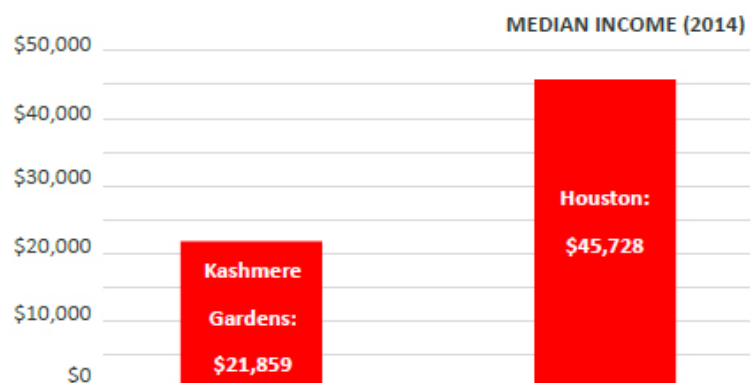
RESOURCES AND STAKEHOLDERS

Neighborhood sources of social capital are critical stakeholders for the success of this goal; leveraging community assets is critical for inclusive development that benefits local residents. These include schools, churches, social clubs, neighborhood associations, and residents of all ages.

ANALYSIS AND INSIGHTS

Kashmere Gardens is an historically African-American neighborhood with deep cultural roots and a strong musical history. Churches and religious institutions play a significant role in community life. Its urban fabric is predominantly single-family homes on large lots.

According to U.S. Census data, approximately 61% of residents are black, and the Latino population has grown from 30% in 2000 to 37% in 2014.



The undated photo to the right shows the Kashmere Stage Band, active from 1968-1974. (Image: The AU Review)



Children and adults age 18-35 are the largest age groups among residents.

Nearly 40% of residents do not have a high school diploma or GED. Correspondingly, the median neighborhood resident income earns less than half of the citywide median income. These traits underscore the importance of education and pathways to employment in this study.

In 2014, The Reinvestment Fund completed a "Market Value Analysis" to compare the strength of the housing market across city neighborhoods. Kashmere Gardens sub-areas fall entirely within the lowest two classifications, indicating low demand for housing in the area. Typical home sales prices range from \$27,000 to \$50,000. Few building permits are issued for the neighborhood relative to citywide, and it has higher rates of vacancy. Property values, however, have risen in the East End and to the west in Northside, radiating out from Downtown

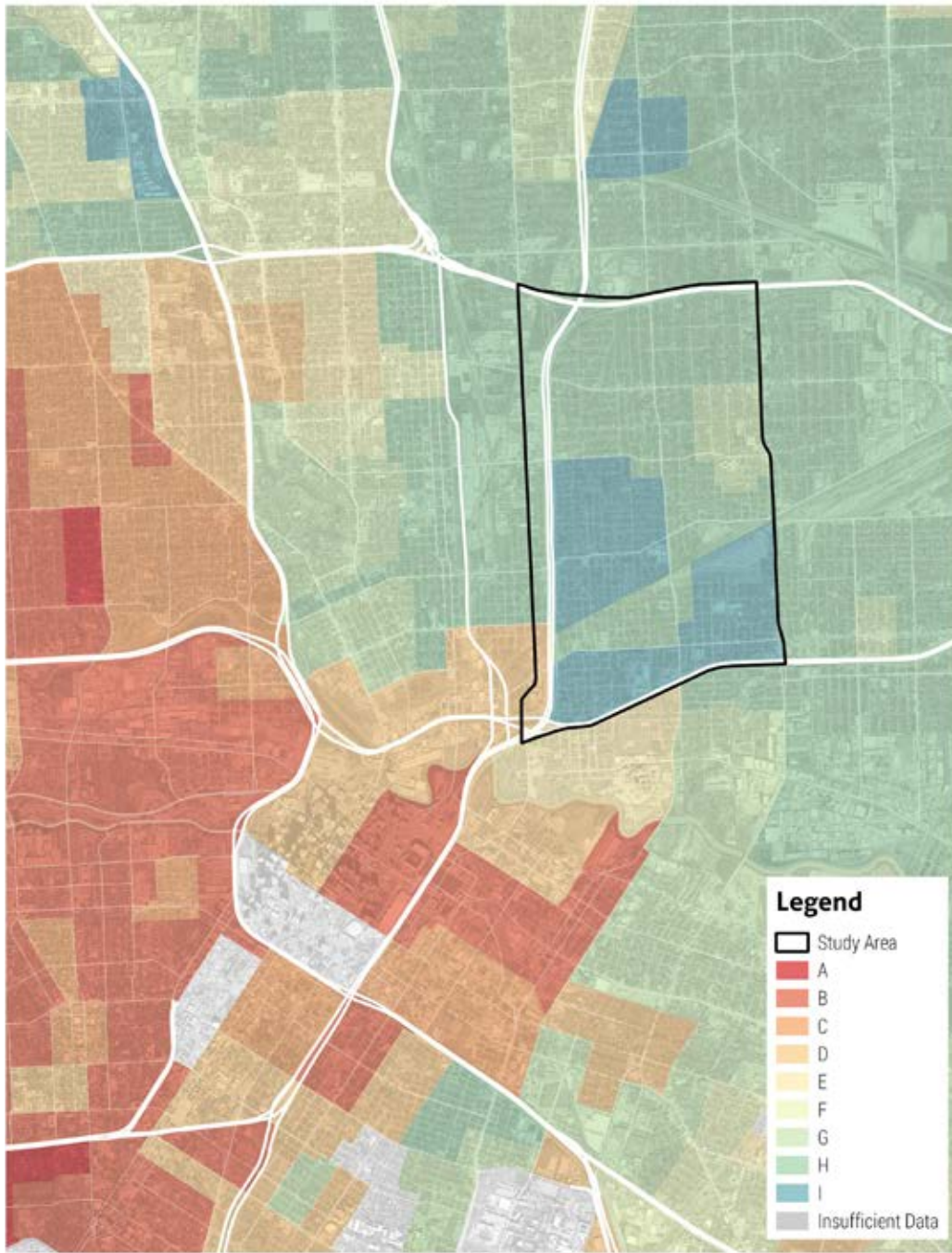
Furthermore, low commercial rents (typically \$9/sf or less) make new market-based commercial development difficult.



STRATEGIES TO EXPLORE

Prepare for future potential of increasing values generated by Kashmere Gardens' location by ensuring that existing residents can benefit from new investment. Strategies for investment need to balance kick-starting the market to address the needs of existing residents for high-quality services and new housing, and ensuring that new investments do not displace existing community members due to rising prices in the long term.

Kashmere Gardens has a rich history of involvement.



MARKET VALUE ANALYSIS

Kashmere Gardens sub-areas are classified as H and I - the weakest class of housing markets. Market strength can be seen spreading out from Downtown Houston. The A-I Market Value Analysis (MVA) scale is based on many regional factor such as sale prices, foreclosures, vacancies, owner vs. renter occupied and housing unit violations. More about the Houston area MVA values can be found at: http://houstontx.gov/housing/Houston_MVA_Public_Presentation.pdf

MVA Cluster	Number of Block Groups	Median Sales Price 2010-11	Variance of Sales Price 2010-11	Foreclosures as a Percent of Sales 2010-11	Percent Vacant Housing Units 2010-2012	Permits as a Percent of Housing Units 2010-12	Percent Owner Occupied 2010	Percent Publicly Subsidized Rental 2012	Percent Commerical/Industrial Area 2012	Percent of Housing Units with Violations 2012
A	40	\$571,150	0.529	0.57%	1.88%	2.66%	78.53%	0.00%	3.73%	0.78%
B	104	\$315,423	0.463	2.19%	1.78%	1.76%	28.98%	1.38%	10.22%	2.06%
C	117	\$272,641	0.444	1.02%	2.49%	2.59%	79.65%	0.78%	6.52%	2.52%
D	129	\$147,074	0.485	9.00%	1.77%	0.37%	31.50%	1.96%	9.42%	3.52%
E	113	\$146,319	0.408	1.59%	1.26%	1.28%	78.98%	3.68%	5.36%	4.43%
F	157	\$81,771	0.494	16.97%	2.59%	0.40%	71.34%	5.96%	8.14%	12.47%
G	158	\$79,332	0.463	21.83%	2.15%	0.28%	31.41%	4.90%	11.87%	4.45%
H	153	\$50,314	0.624	66.07%	6.03%	0.45%	55.10%	6.62%	10.05%	12.21%
I	35	\$27,757	0.567	80.14%	4.91%	0.33%	26.56%	7.78%	4.48%	9.14%
Not Classified	120	N/A	N/A	10.35%	1.43%	0.07%	4.64%	3.01%	17.37%	1.43%

Invest in the public realm. Many management districts use public realm investment as a branding and business attraction strategy for their neighborhoods; defining key areas for retail attraction, and investing in public realm upgrades in those areas, will be an important opportunity for further exploration.

Develop high-quality housing that is affordable to local residents. As further defined in the following Existing Conditions section, creating high-quality housing that existing residents can afford will be an important strategy to prevent displacement and help existing residents remain to enjoy the benefits of property value increases and new amenities in Kashmere Gardens.

Create a coordinated investment plan to accomplish goals. In areas where the market has not yet begun to accomplish a community's goals and wishes, it is important to create a sense of certainty and predictability for potential investors and developers. Creating an investment framework for the area will signal investors that the community is prepared to support new development, and will help create guidelines for the Management District to contribute resources and leverage new funding sources toward public-private partnerships.



Above: Consider public realm investment to enhance investment potential. Below: Continue to build new housing choices for residents of Kashmere Gardens.



Public realm enhancements could include median and open space improvements

2: HIGH-QUALITY HOUSING OPTIONS

INCREASE HIGH-QUALITY HOUSING OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS OF ALL INCOME LEVELS.

KEY FINDINGS

On average, residents of Kashmere Gardens are not cost-burdened. However, much of the housing stock is aging, and improvements to existing stock as well as new housing investments are needed to promote housing choice. Opportunities are needed for both existing residents and potential new residents.

An Affordable Place to Live: Kashmere Gardens remains a relatively affordable place to live, unlike many other neighborhoods in the 610 loop where housing costs are rising. Most residents are not cost-burdened; a typical renter household pays 30% of their annual income on housing costs, which is in line with the U.S., Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines for how much families should spend on housing. In addition, many homeowners own their homes outright without any remaining mortgage.

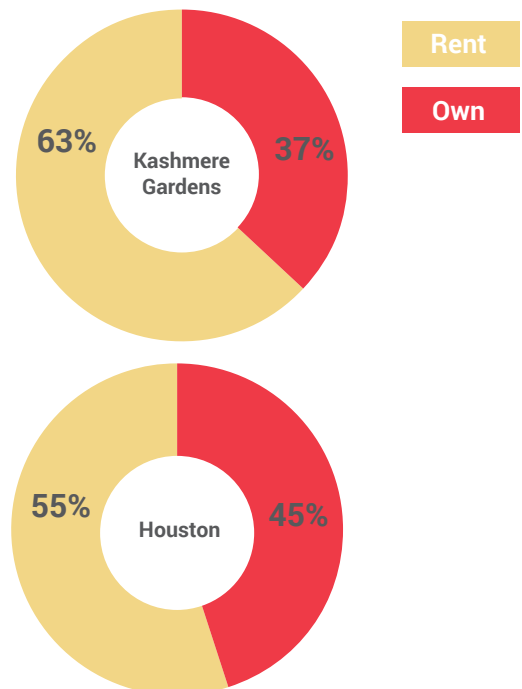
Predominantly Single-Family: Kashmere Gardens has a high prevalence of single-family housing on medium-to-large lots. Preserving opportunities for single-family development will therefore be important, but additional housing choices should also be available to residents.

More Renters than Homeowners: Kashmere Gardens has a similar homeowner-to-renter ratio as the City of Houston as a whole, though the percentage of renters is slightly higher. In Kashmere Gardens, 63% of residents rent their homes, while in Houston as a whole, 55% of residents are renters. Because renters tend to be more vulnerable to displacement due to changing market conditions than homeowners, opportunities for increasing homeownership should be explored.

Cost-Appropriate Living is Needed: The median household income in the study area is \$21,859 per year. According to the HUD standard that states that households should spend no more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs, this means the median household can afford to pay a total of \$546 per month on rent/mortgage payments, utilities, and insurance combined. New housing choices should include options that are cost-appropriate for existing residents; new single-family homes sized for families may need subsidy to bring them within reach, but multi-family and smaller single-family options can come closer to meeting families' monthly budgets on a market basis.



Currently, Kashmere Gardens is a predominantly single-family neighborhood with houses on relatively large lots that allow for yards and off-street parking.



Sources: American Community Survey 5-Year Data

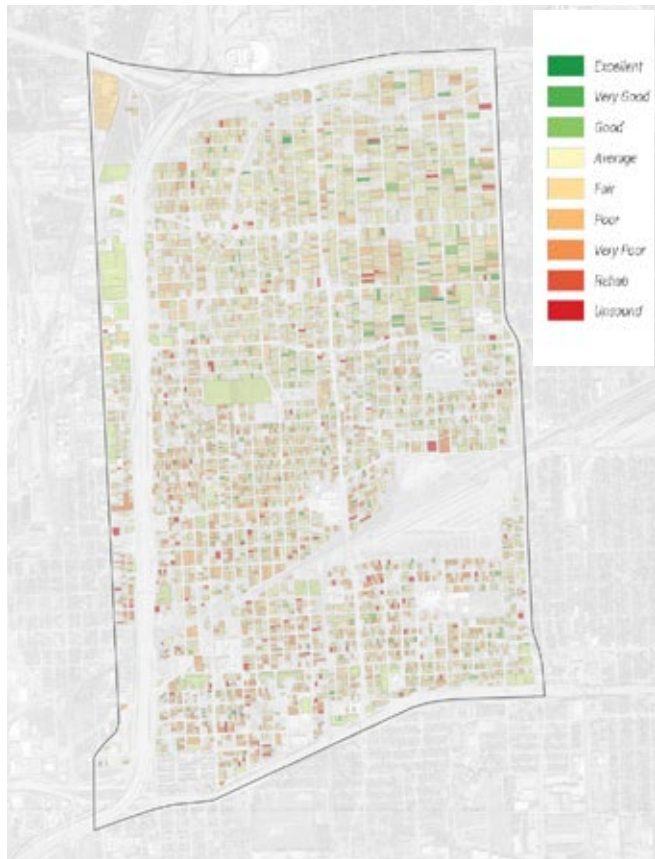
Housing Age & Condition: A map of housing conditions in the Kashmere Gardens study area, based on Harris County assessor data, shows that the condition of the local housing stock is variable, but many of the neighborhood's buildings are considered "Average" and below. A number of properties are rated "Poor," "Very Poor," and even "Unsound."

Part of the reason for the current condition of the housing stock is likely the historic and long-established nature of the neighborhood. As seen in the "Building Age" map, many of the structures in the neighborhood were built before 1940. The neighborhood has a high incidence of what are likely family homes that have been passed down through generations; of the homeowner households in the neighborhood, about 70% are free-and-clear, meaning they do not currently hold a mortgage. Nationwide, only about 29% of homeowners do not have a mortgage.

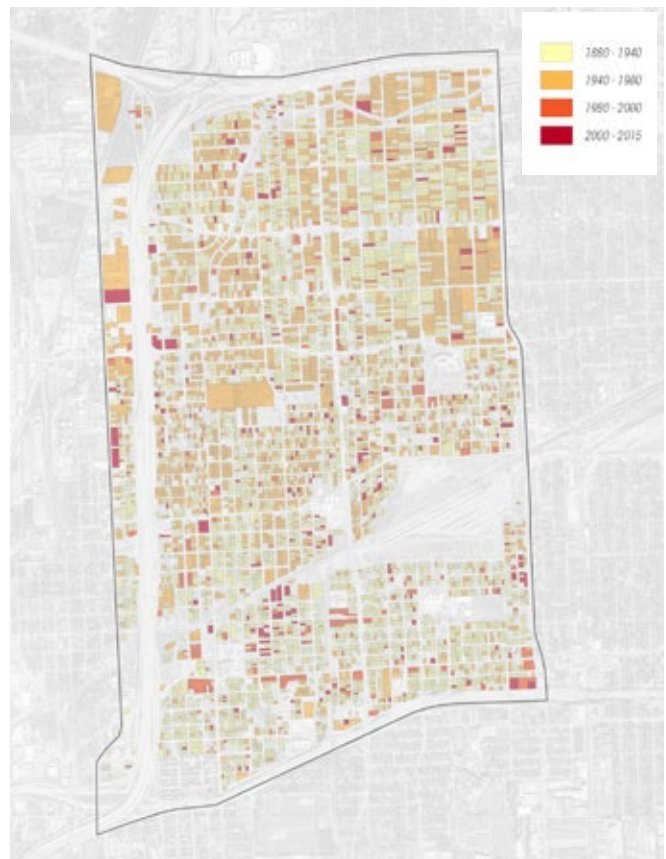
These family homes are therefore valuable assets for their residents and should be preserved, but often their age means they need upkeep and reinvestment which not all residents may be able to afford.

While this aging housing stock brings needs for home repair and rehabilitation, it is likely also contributing to the ongoing affordability of the neighborhood's housing. The critical issue will be to develop strategies to ensure that new investment in housing benefits existing residents (e.g. home repair programs) and expands their housing choices (e.g. senior housing options), rather than displacing them. Some of these strategies are listed in the "Strategies to Explore" section of this goal for further analysis

Building Condition



Building Age



Sources: Harris County Appraisal District, Houston-Galveston Area Council, Open Street Map



Sources: Harris County OHSEM

Flooding is an issue in many parts of Kashmere Gardens.

RESILIENT AND ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOUSING CHOICES BRING COMMUNITY- CENTERED VALUE TO NEIGHBORHOODS.

Resilience & Energy Efficiency: Goal 5 covers flooding issues in the Kashmere Gardens study area in more detail; to give basic insight into the severity of the issue, the image to the left shows the results of the flooding in October 2015 in the Hunting Bayou area. Because much of the study area lies within the 100-year floodplain, flood insurance is likely to be a significant monthly housing cost for many residents. Finding ways to elevate both new and existing buildings above Base Flood Elevation and create opportunities for affordable living outside the floodplain are therefore both important components of a resilient housing strategy.

In addition to insurance costs, utility bills are another ongoing monthly cost that can create cost burden for renters and homeowners. Aging homes that have some areas that are not weather-tight or fully insulated are often subject to high air conditioning costs in the summer months and heating costs in the winter. Weatherization programs that provide insulation and work to "seal the envelope" of a home by closing off as many gaps as possible can provide the added benefits of keeping out moisture (which causes mold and rot), insects, and pests.

Developing housing stock that is more resistant to water damage and has more affordable energy costs is a proven way to help residents benefit from their homes for the long-term. When high-quality housing choices are available, and the quality of existing stock is enhanced, neighborhoods can gain in value without suffering from displacement of long-time residents.

RESOURCES & STAKEHOLDERS:

Stakeholders to work with when improving the neighborhood's existing housing stock and building new options for cost-appropriate living include government agencies, community development corporations, and credit unions that can provide financing options.

Government agencies that deal with relevant housing and development issues include the Houston Housing and Community Development Department, which provides subsidies for affordable rental and homeownership projects; the Houston Housing Authority, which manages its properties and provides Housing Choice Vouchers to renters; and the Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority (LARA), which works to acquire vacant properties and has programs that enable workforce housing construction.

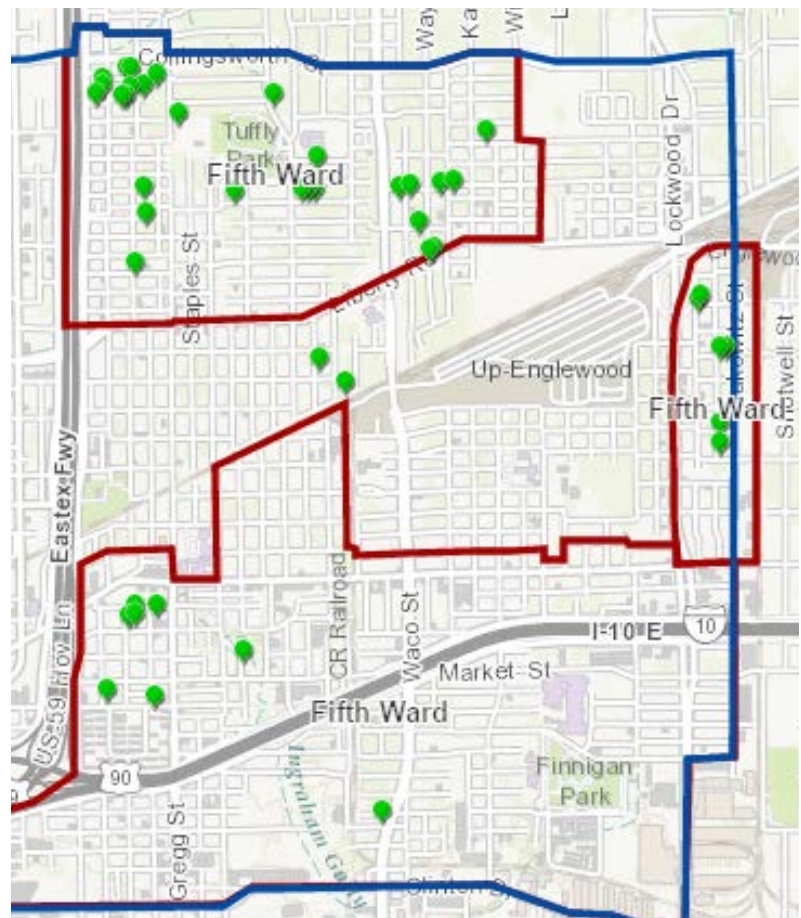
LARA's workforce housing programs include assembly and sale of vacant properties to developers, who can create single-family homes to be sold for up to \$212,000, or duplexes for up to \$125,000. While this is more than the median Kashmere Gardens resident could generally afford, opportunities exist to find additional subsidy for duplexes while creating a community-centered marketing strategy that attracts relatives and friends of existing residents to purchase new single-family housing options in the area. Currently LARA owns property in the Fifth Ward portion of the study area, but does not have property in the Kashmere Gardens portion.

Community development corporations in the area include the Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation, which has a focus area that includes the southern portion of the study area. Houston Habitat for Humanity can provide new housing options at an affordable price; Rebuilding Together

Houston has a home repair program for seniors.

Credit unions and community development financial institutions (CDFIs) can be a critical source of funding for small home repair loans, particularly if they are able to partner with a government agency to establish a loan-loss reserve or other risk-reduction techniques to enable loan provision to lower-income residents. Covenant Community Capital is one example of a local CDFI that could be a strong partners.

LARA Properties in the Fifth Ward



Sources: Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority

ANALYSIS & INSIGHTS

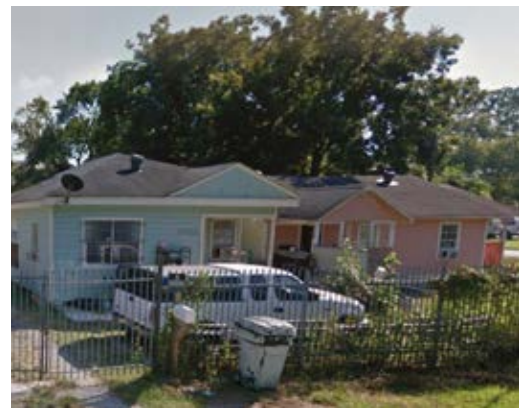
The residents and stakeholders from Kashmere Gardens and the entire study area have expressed a strong desire to ensure that residents have access to a multitude of high-quality housing choices that are appropriate for their ages and life stages.

Families with Children: As seen in Goal 1, children and young adults are some of the largest demographics in Kashmere Gardens. The prevalence of larger single-family housing types likely makes this neighborhood attractive for families and this characteristic should be preserved. A combination of home-repair loan and grant options combined with new duplexes and subsidized single-family development should continue to provide options for the family demographic of housing demand. In addition, attracting family members and friends of existing residents may provide a new opportunity for market-rate single family development that serves families.

Seniors: Many seniors also live in single-family homes, some of which need maintenance or upkeep that is harder to accomplish as residents age. Providing home-repair loans and free home-repair services for seniors can help with major upkeep. However, new multi-family senior housing options within the study area could also be an asset for residents who no longer want to deal with upkeep of a full home, but want to stay in their long-time neighborhood. In addition, ensuring that seniors make wills that enable transfer of title upon their passing is critical to ensure that housing ownership and inheritance remains clear.

Empty-Nesters: Smaller single-family housing options, as well as multi-family housing, may be appropriate for empty nester singles or couples whose children have moved away.

Younger Adults: Multi-family housing along commercial corridors and with access to transit options and highways may be appropriate for younger adults who do not yet have children themselves.



More housing options are needed to retain a variety of residents.

STRATEGIES TO EXPLORE:

The following strategies are intended for exploration during the remainder of the Livable Centers study effort.

Create a community-based marketing strategy for new residents. To ensure that new development benefits the community and keeps the social cohesion that helps make the study area special, new development should be combined with a community-based marketing strategy that reaches out to friends and relatives of existing residents. Churches, neighborhood and superneighborhood associations, and other community organizations can assist in getting the word out to those with local connections about new housing opportunities. The study effort will include work on what techniques are most effective for outreach, identifying enthusiastic partners, and researching best practices. Public realm and quality-of-life improvements can also be coordinated with this marketing strategy.

Develop homeowner assistance programs for existing owners. Homeowner assistance programs for weatherization, home repair, and resilience improvements can all help local residents maximize the longevity and value of their homes while remaining within their own neighborhoods. These programs can help prevent displacement and create momentum for new development in the neighborhood. The study will examine the availability of funding sources including HOME funds, LiHEAP funds, energy efficiency credits for Section 8 landlords, and other federal, state, and local housing options as well as local resources of labor and skill.

Help renters transition to ownership when they are ready. Long-time renters and first-time homebuyers often need housing counseling, down payment and closing cost assistance, credit counseling, and other programs designed to ensure a smooth transition from renting to owning a home. Creating cost-appropriate homeownership opportunities will help prevent any potential displacement of renters in the future due to rising housing costs. The study will explore resources and stakeholders available to partner in this effort.

Ensure elders can age in place in the neighborhood. Aging in place can occur through adaptation of seniors' existing homes for ADA compliance, or through development of new multi-family senior housing options that can also include assisted living when necessary. Senior centers and transportation services should also be considered.



Homeowner assistance programs are needed for upkeep of existing buildings.

Provide access to assistance with wills and heir property rules. As seniors prepare to pass their homes on to their children and family members, having a proper will and ensuring title is transferred correctly is critical to ensuring inherited property and wealth can benefit future generations. In areas that are prone to flooding, federal assistance may not be available to residents who do not have full, legal title to their family properties. Local legal assistance organizations should be consulted.

Examine opportunities for development of new housing choices including multi-family and duplex typologies. While residents are very interested in preserving the single-family living opportunities that characterize the neighborhood today, they are also looking to the future and seeing that young Houstonians, local elders, and new residents might all desire or benefit from having an array of housing choices in the neighborhood. In order to facilitate new development and investment that remains beneficial to the community, residents are open to considering an array of housing choices that could help revitalize and re-energize the Kashmere Gardens area.



New housing should explore other housing types such as duplexes and small apartments.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community members who attended the first public meeting and contributed to the housing table were predominantly older residents who own their homes, meaning that more outreach to younger residents and renters will be necessary as the study progresses. The residents who attended mentioned weatherization, minor home repairs, energy efficiency improvements, foundations and shoring, and roof repair as opportunities to assist existing homeowners with highly impactful home repair assistance.

In addition, residents expressed concern about the lack of a viable low-cost home repair loan product for local residents to use in financing their own home improvements. They felt that the availability of such a program would help preserve the neighborhood's character and enable the passing on of hereditary property. Many of them also had small repairs that needed volunteer assistance but would not require enough funding to justify taking a regular bank loan. Volunteer assistance and microfinancing could be potential alternatives in these situations.

Access to credit was mentioned as a potential barrier for new homebuyers and for those seeking home repair loans. Participants felt that addressing this issue through credit union partnerships and credit counseling would be beneficial.

Finally, the residents who attended the first meeting were more interested in providing

a range of housing choices, from small to large and single-family to multi-family, than in ensuring that all new development follows the same single-family pattern of the existing residential fabric. Generally, if there is a need for a particular housing type to serve the community, residents feel that the housing type should be made available.

Options mentioned as desirable during the first public meeting included multi-family options for seniors and young people near transit, and affordable single- and two-family options for young families.



Community engagement is an important piece of the puzzle.

3: INFRASTRUCTURE AS AN OPPORTUNITY

CAPITALIZE ON INFRASTRUCTURE THAT CURRENTLY SERVES AS A BARRIER TO OPPORTUNITY.

KEY FINDINGS

Barriers abound: Railroads, channelized bayous, and highways effectively wall off the study area from surrounding neighborhoods. Often, crossings of these barriers are more than a half mile apart. Moreover, lack of sidewalks on local streets creates unsafe walking conditions within the neighborhood.

Opportunities for recreation and transportation: Harris County Flood Control has been acquiring properties along Hunting Bayou for flood mitigation. These are key opportunities to create open space and trails, such as through the Bayou Greenways Initiative.

Regional access: Kashmere Gardens is located near the center of the fourth largest city in the U.S., and is ringed with access points to multiple interstates surrounding the neighborhoods. Vacant lots near these on-ramps and off-ramps are opportunities to attract large retail developments and catalyze private commercial investment in the community.

Industrial and freight uses: A small portion of one of the largest rail yards in Houston is located in Kashmere Gardens. This, plus the many railroads that serve it, interrupt the street network, making it harder for residents and visitors to move about the neighborhood. These railyards and railroads are unlikely to be deactivated. But they can provide employment opportunities for residents, and could attract light industrial and manufacturing jobs.



Top: A massive railyard sits in the center of the neighborhood, creating multiple traffic and land use conflicts.

Above: Many neighborhood streets were constructed without curbs, sidewalks, or underground drainage.

Right: The study area is bounded on three sides by three interstates and permeated by several railroads and drainage bayous, making the neighborhood difficult to access from surrounding areas and challenging to move within.

PHYSICAL BARRIERS



LEGEND

- Study Area
- Barrier Crossings
- Physical Barriers
- Parks
- Water Features
- Bayous
- Creeks & Streams
- Edge of Pavement
- Railroads

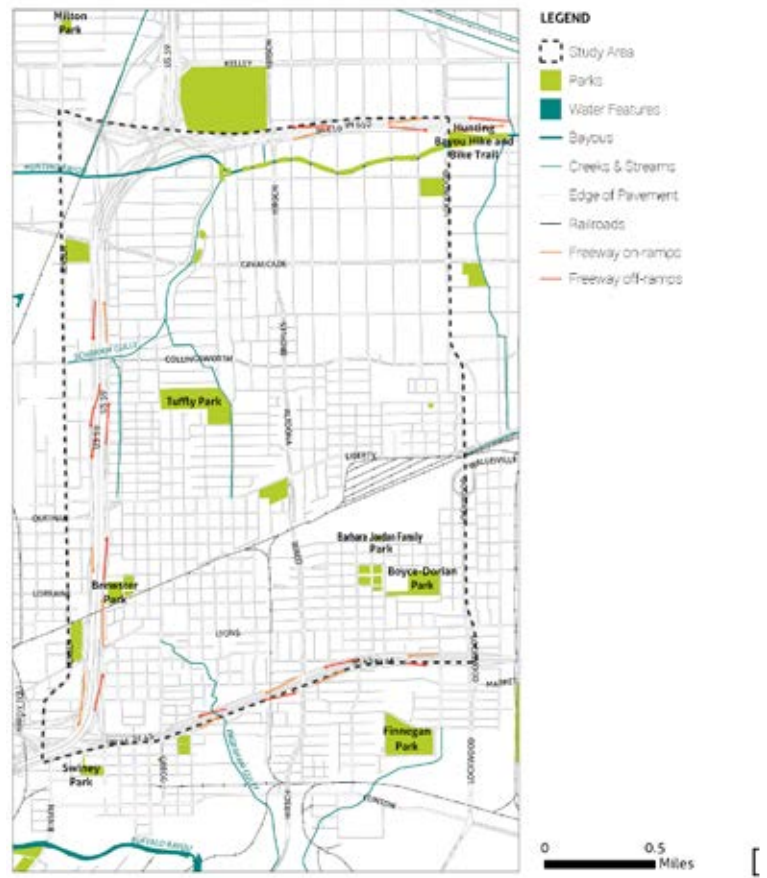
ANALYSIS AND INSIGHTS

At the June 2016 Community Meeting, residents expressed concerns for various issues relating to infrastructure and the public realm. Illegal dumping in the public right-of-way and on vacant lots was the most frequently raised issue. The contributing factors to illegal dumping include overgrown lots and existing pollution sites. The consequences of illegal dumping noted were community image, quality of life, and stray dogs.

Pedestrian facilities were the next highest concern, and include lack of sidewalks, missing sidewalks, and poor sidewalks leading to bus stops. Open ditches, while noted as being effective in providing drainage during storm events, nonetheless pushes pedestrians into the roadway. A lack of pedestrian connections across the man-made barriers - particularly the railyard and the freeways, such as the I10/US59 interchange – were also cited.

Additional safety issues associated with the Brewster Park cited were that the location encourages teenagers to jump the fence and put themselves in danger.

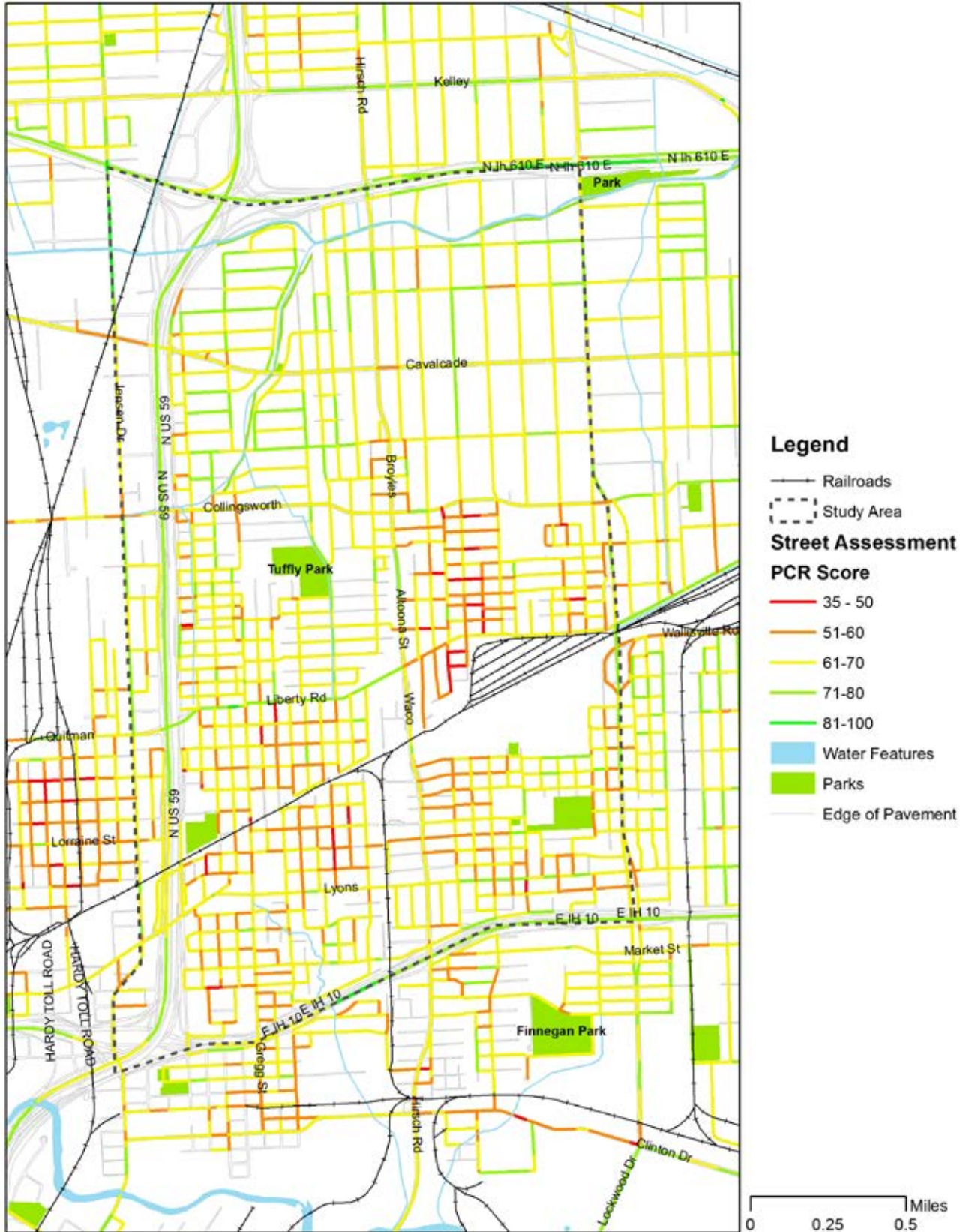
FREEWAY ACCESS



Above: Kashmere Gardens is located near the center of the fourth largest city in the U.S., and is ringed with access points to multiple interstates surrounding the neighborhoods.

Right: A pavement conditions survey conducted by the City of Houston Department of Public Works and Engineering in 2010 found poor pavement conditions (red and orange) located primarily between Collingsworth Street and Lyons Avenue.

PAVEMENT CONDITIONS



Several METRO transit lines serve Kashmere Gardens, though less service is available following the redesign of the system in 2015. While these changes have not been raised by the community during the planning process so far, the project is an opportunity to evaluate the impact of these changes on the community's access to jobs, education and other services and amenities.

Street designs vary from narrow, sidewalk-absent local streets, in which motorists and pedestrians must share the road, to commercial thoroughfares that connect to surrounding neighborhoods with bike lanes, such as Lyons Avenue and Cavalcade Street, and transit routes.

RESOURCES AND STAKEHOLDERS

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) builds, maintains and operates the highways surrounding Kashmere Gardens. It also oversees rail planning and inspection. Union Pacific owns the railroads that traverse the study area and the Lockwood freight station. Amtrak, BNSF and Kansas City Southern each maintain track rights.

The Harris County Flood Control District plans, builds and maintains the channels and detention systems that drain Harris County, including Hunting Bayou.

TRANSIT ACCESS



Above: Several transit routes serve the neighborhood and connect it to surrounding destinations. One route is on the "frequent network," arriving every 15 minutes or sooner during peak hours.

STRATEGIES TO EXPLORE

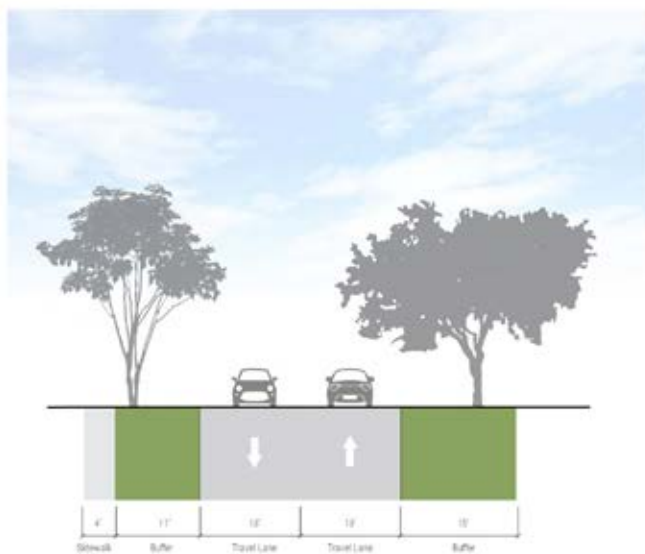
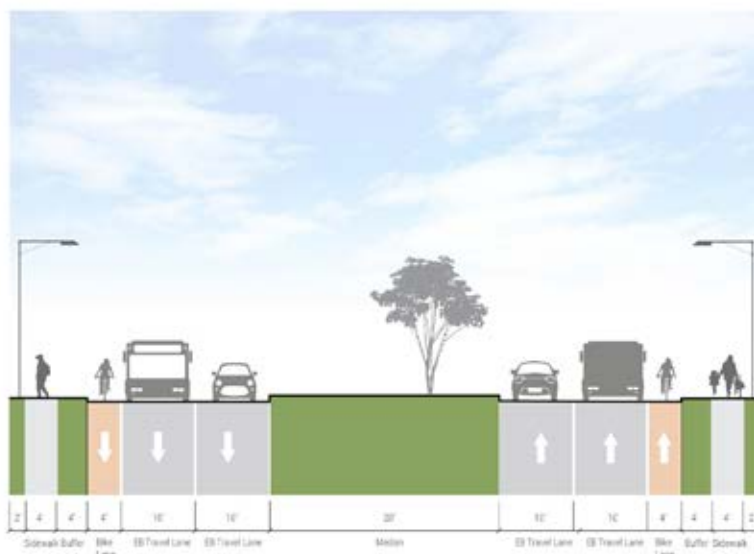
While highways, railroads and rail yards create conflicts with residential uses, they offer opportunities for neighborhood investment that can support quality of life objectives, including cleaner, safer and more convenient streets for walking and gathering.

High vehicular traffic at highway on-ramps and off-ramps make vacant land at these locations attractive for commercial development. Industrial businesses seeking train and highway access could be recruited to open at the railyard and to hire local residents.

Unused vacant land, particularly within five hundred feet of interstates and railroads, could be acquired and converted into vegetated areas to buffer noise and air pollution.

Opportunities to improve bicycle, pedestrian and transit access include building a shared use path within the right of way adjacent to Hunting Bayou; prioritizing neighborhood streets for sidewalk construction; reallocating space in streets for pocket parks or bike facilities with wide rights-of-way; and adjusting the new transit network design to address any gaps in the new service.

STREETSCAPES



Top: Cavalcade Street as existing, which provides minimal space for cyclists and transit riders, but has a wide median.

Above: A typical neighborhood street as existing. Many have sidewalks only on one side, or no sidewalks at all.

4: COMPLEMENT CITYWIDE PLANS

ENSURE LIVABLE CENTERS RECOMMENDATIONS BUILD ON PREVIOUS CITYWIDE PLANS.

KEY FINDINGS

Numerous citywide planning initiatives that impact Kashmere Gardens have been completed, adopted and implemented to varying extents in recent years. These include:

- The Houston Bike Plan (City of Houston)
- METRO System Reimagining (METRO)
- Parks Master Plan (City of Houston Parks and Recreation)

Houston Bike Plan

The City of Houston developed the Houston Bike Plan through a 12-month planning effort to update the City's Comprehensive Bikeway Plan originally adopted in 1993. The City of Houston Planning & Development Department led the update of the plan in coordination with the Public Works & Engineering Department and Houston Parks and Recreation Department. A key plan goal is to increase the number of "high-comfort" lanes and connect them across the city, so riders of all abilities may feel safe traversing neighborhoods, with a goal of over 1,600 miles of bikeways

Upon adoption by the City of Houston, public agencies and community organizations throughout Houston will be involved in implementing the Plan. These include Public Works and Engineering, Parks and Recreation, and Planning and Development Departments, the Houston Parks Board, the Texas Department of Transportation, Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ's), management districts and others.

More information is available at houstonbikeplan.org.



Numerous city-wide planning initiatives affect Kashmere Gardens including bike and transportation plans.



METRO System Reimagining Plan

On August 16, 2015, METRO implemented a new bus network with the goal of offering simpler, faster, more frequent service, and better service on weekends throughout its service area. This Plan, adopted by the METRO Board of Directors in February 2015, was the first comprehensive review of its transit system since its inception as an agency in the 1970s.

The higher frequency was achieved through several measures, such as more efficient routes, and reallocation of service between neighborhoods, based on varying levels of demand for service. This means that neighborhoods that have lost population and jobs, such as Kashmere Gardens, have seen reduced levels of fixed-route bus service. For instance, prior to the new bus network, residents of Kashmere Gardens were able to ride to the Texas Medical Center without transferring, but the new network requires them to ride the METRORail Red Line.

Parks Master Plan

In 2015, the City of Houston completed the Parks Master Plan, assessing city park land resources in 21 sectors across Houston. This plan was prepared as a document that builds upon the previous Parks Master Plans that were completed in 2001 and 2007. The entire City of Houston parks system encompasses 370 parks and over 37,859 acres of parkland. With the current inventory of parkland (HPARD, Harris County, and Fort Bend County), as reported by the Trust for Public Land, Houston has almost 23 acres per 1,000 people (the national standard is 20 acres per 1,000 people). The 21 Park Sectors are defined by freeways and the city limits, not by political boundaries such as Council Districts. Master Plan Goals include:

- To Create Equity and Balance in the System
- Create Connections
- Demonstrate Environmental Leadership
- Provide Equitable Services for all Citizens

The Parks Plan makes recommendations for each sector specific to the goals above. In the sector corresponding to the Kashmere Gardens study area (17), the plan recommends the following prioritization of action:

- Develop Neighborhood connections to parks and trails
- Revitalize existing parks
- Acquire new parkland
- Develop new park facilities
- Preserve environmentally sensitive areas
- Develop partnerships with the school system and other entities

The Kashmere Gardens Livable Centers Study directly addresses park access and connectivity recommendations consistent with those of the Parks Plan in goal 7.3.

5. OPTIMIZE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS AND AWARENESS

OPTIMIZE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS AND MINIMIZE NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS.

KEY FINDINGS

Kashmere Gardens, like much of eastern Houston, has been heavily linked with industry and transportation centered around the Port of Houston, Buffalo Bayou, and one of the largest rail terminals in the City. The study area is defined on three sides by major highways, isolating Kashmere Gardens from the surrounding neighborhoods and posing both safety and health hazards. Finally, much of the neighborhood lies in the floodplain of Hunting Bayou which, as a result of channelization and other interventions is often seen as a liability rather than an asset. As a historically minority and low-income neighborhood, the study area has seen a disproportionately high level of environmental burden in the form of industry and infrastructure, yet has received little protection from the accompanying health and safety hazards.

Environmental Justice Concerns: Kashmere Gardens is disproportionately impacted by environmental hazards compared with regional averages. These hazards include proximity to waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities; proximity to EPA superfund sites, and soil pollution (EJ Screen). Soil pollution: the neighborhood is in the top 10% of the region for lead paint contamination potential. Kashmere Gardens is in the top 1% for proximity to EPA Superfund sites, top 2% for proximity to EPA hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal sites, and top 18% for proximity to facilities with potential chemical accident management plans. Kashmere Gardens is surrounded by six past and current superfund sites.

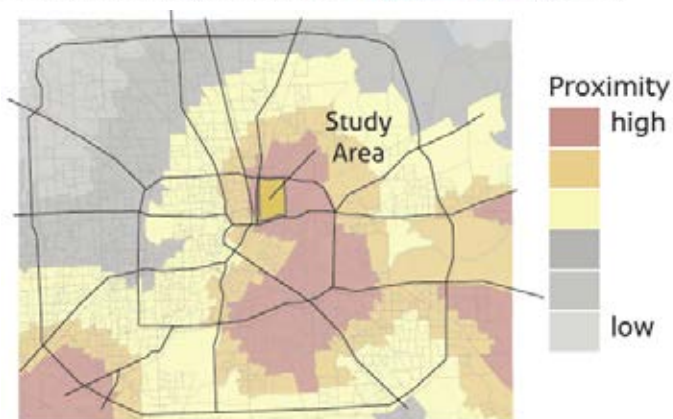
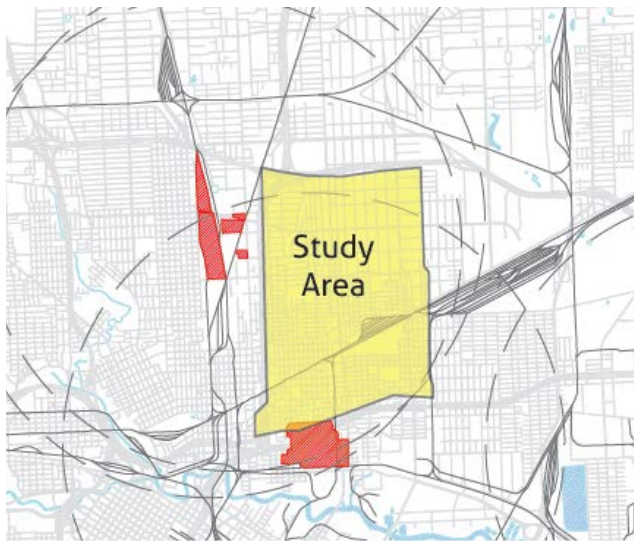
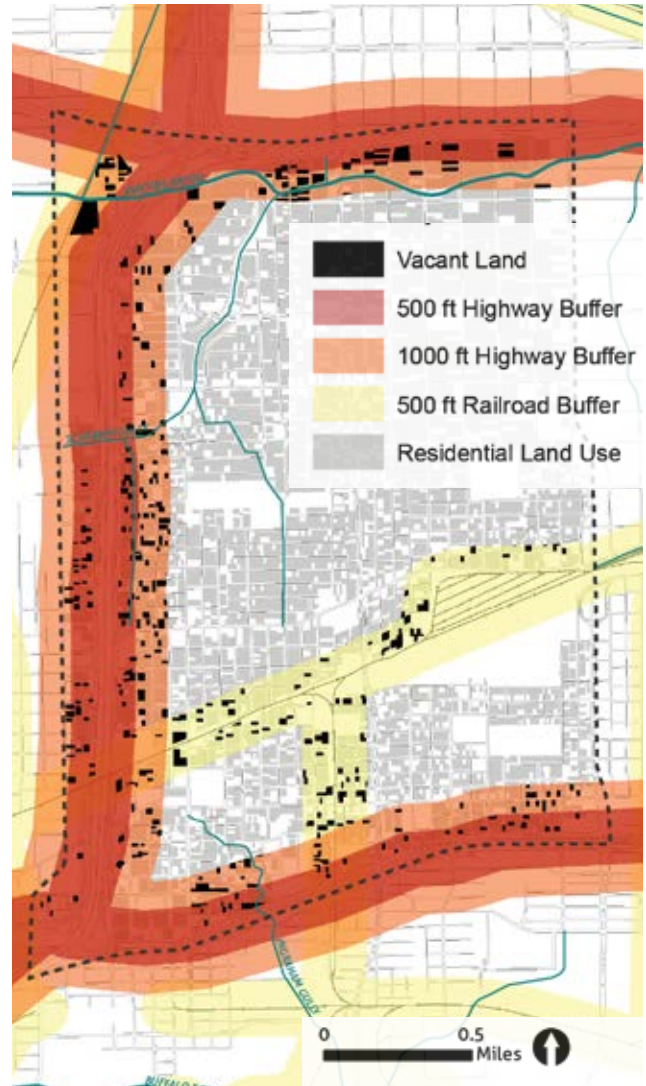
Dumping in Vacant Lots: Illegal dumping and disposal of construction and industrial waste is common in the neighborhood, due to lack of enforcement and a high number of vacant lots.



Hunting Bayou (top) weaves through the Kashmere Gardens neighborhood; Union Pacific rail yard (middle) is a dominant feature in the neighborhood landscape; and, dumping (bottom) is common along roadsides and in vacant lots throughout the neighborhood.

Air Quality Hazards: Air quality in the study area also suffers from the presence of major highways and industry. The proximity of residences to these highways as well as the lack of tree cover to mitigate air pollution exacerbates the health risks caused by air pollution from industry and infrastructure. The neighborhood is in the top 1% in the region for particulate matter pollution, and in the top 2% for traffic proximity. These indicators are linked with premature death due to heart or lung disease, increased asthma, a higher rate of heart attacks, and decreased respiratory function.

Air Pollution Hazard Zones



Waste Treatment/Storage/Disposal Sites (EJSCREEN)

Left: Kashmere Gardens is adjacent to several EPA Superfund sites, shown in red.

Left, below: The neighborhood is within close proximity to waste treatment, storage and disposal sites.

Impervious Cover, Tree Canopy and Heat Risk:

Pavement, buildings, and other impervious features in Kashmere Gardens cause numerous environmental problems by blocking water from entering the ground thereby increasing flood risk; and, by increasing local temperatures. The Kashmere Gardens study area has 47.65% impervious cover. City-wide, Houston has 37% impervious cover and adds an additional 988 acres of impervious cover every year (Nowak, 2012). Houston regulations incentivize that single family residential lots of 15,000 square feet in area or less must not exceed 75% impervious cover without additional stormwater detention measures, however, experts suggest areas with impervious cover as low as 2 –10% show signs of physical degradation to waterbodies and areas with 8-12% impervious cover levels negatively affect aquatic habitat (USEPA Office of Water Recovery).

Tree Canopy found throughout Kashmere gardens benefits the community by lowering utility bills, shading the neighborhood, mitigating flooding through interception of rain, and reducing local temperatures in areas with trees. Houston loses an estimated 2,200 acres of tree cover annually, one of the highest rates of loss in the country. Tree planting and protection is necessary to maintain canopy cover in Kashmere Gardens (Nowak, 2012). Average interception of rainfall by tree canopy cover ranges from 12-40% and varies by rainfall event and tree species (Catrone, Vincent - Extension Urban Forester, Penn State University).

Impervious Cover

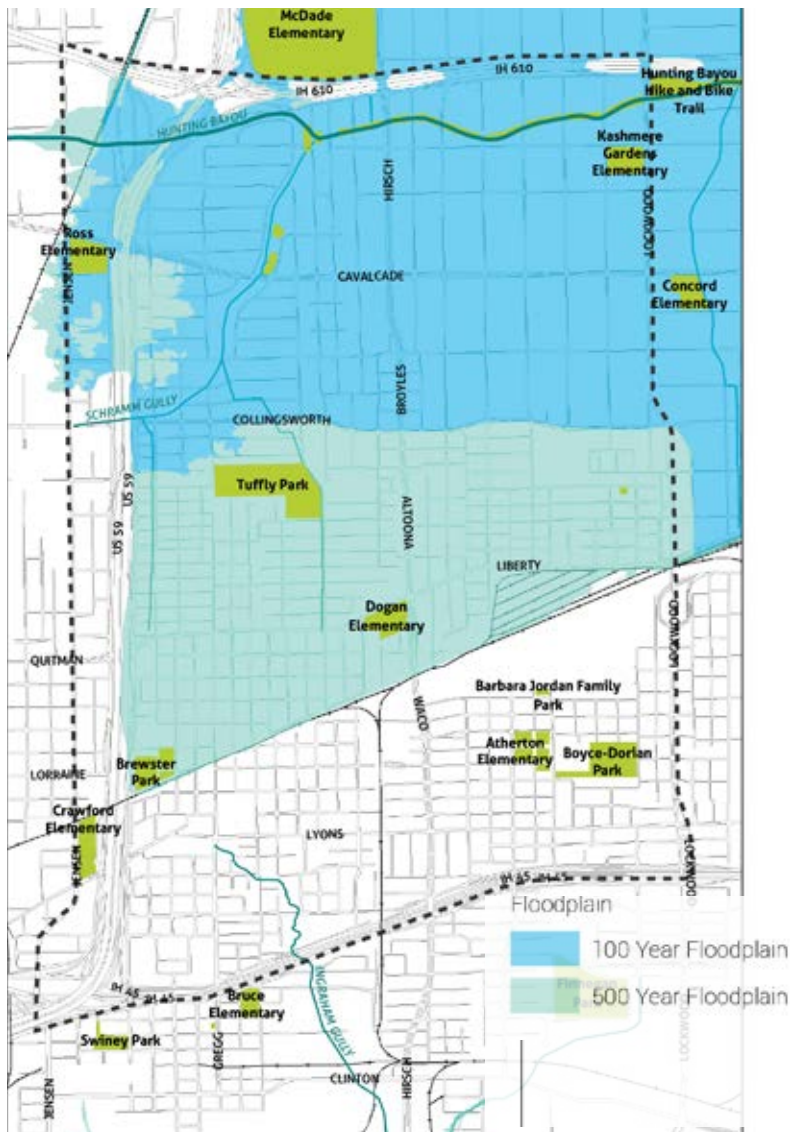


Tree Canopy



Sources: Impervious cover - City of Houston; Tree canopy - National Land Cover Database (2011);

Floodplains



Flooding near Hunting Bayou, October, 2015.

Regional Watersheds



Flood Risk: Water is both an issue and an asset for Kashmere Gardens. The 100-year floodplain covers one-third of the study area. When heavy rain occurs, Hunting Bayou is unable to handle the amount of water on site, thereby causing flooding in low-lying areas throughout the neighborhood. The Bayou has received attention for numerous flood control improvement projects to minimize flooding including a detention basin Northeast of the study area and, Project Hunting, an effort that involved purchasing land along the Bayou to convert to riparian zones capable of mitigating some flooding. Part of Project Hunting also provided recreational amenities such as a hike and bike trail. Upon completion of Project Hunting, it is expected that the 100-year floodplain will be removed from nearly 5,000 residential and commercial structures within the Hunting Bayou watershed (Harris County Flood Control).

RESOURCES AND STAKEHOLDERS

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) builds, maintains and operates the highways surrounding Kashmere Gardens. It also oversees rail planning and inspection. Union Pacific owns the railroads that traverse the study area and the Lockwood freight station. Amtrak, BNSF and Kansas City Southern each maintain track rights.

The City of Houston Department of Public Works and Engineering is responsible for maintaining public right-of-ways including litter collection, tree maintenance, and right-of-way infrastructure such as sidewalks.

The Harris County Flood Control District plans, builds and maintains the channels and detention systems that drain Harris County, including Hunting Bayou.

ANALYSIS AND INSIGHTS

At the June 2016 Community Meeting, residents expressed concerns for various issues relating to environmental assets and hazards throughout the neighborhood. Illegal dumping in the public right-of-way and vacant lots was the most frequently raised issue. The contributing factors to illegal dumping include overgrown lots and existing pollution sites. The consequences of illegal dumping noted were community image, quality of life, and stray dogs.

Air pollution concentrations around the perimeters of the rail terminal and the highways were noted as of concern, and for which the Barbara Jordan Park, located on the rail terminal fence line best illustrates. Pollutants from cars, trucks and trains are found in higher concentrations near major transportation facilities; putting people who live, work or attend school near major transportation facilities at an increased risk of health problems associated with air pollution exposures; including higher rates of asthma onset and aggravation, cardiovascular disease, impaired lung development in children, pre-term and low-birthweight infants, childhood leukemia, and premature death. Children, older adults, people with preexisting cardiopulmonary disease, and people of low socioeconomic status are among those at higher risk.

The EPA has outlined a number of approaches that appear promising for reducing the air pollution near transportation facilities, including: reducing emissions and infrastructure design. Research suggests that sound walls, cut sections, and roadside vegetation can reduce traffic-related air pollutants immediately downwind of a roadway, although researchers have not yet been able to quantify the specific improvements.

Some residents at the June 2016 Community Meeting understood the positive benefits of trees on local temperatures and utility bills but expressed concern over tree maintenance on both private and public property.



Environmental hazards are a problem that needs to be addressed.

STRATEGIES TO EXPLORE

Future siting of potentially environmentally hazardous land uses should be distanced from Kashmere Gardens neighborhoods, parks, and schools and ongoing monitoring should be carried out to ensure existing environmental hazards such as soil contamination, superfund sites, and potential chemical accident sites are managed and mitigated properly.

Programs to help fund regular tree maintenance for homeowners would benefit the neighborhood by lengthening the lifespan of trees, minimizing early die-offs and reductions in ecosystem services such as shading and cooling.

Vacant lots have perhaps the most significant potential to impact the environmental health of the Kashmere Gardens neighborhood. Unused vacant land, particularly within five hundred feet of interstates and railroads, could be acquired and converted into vegetated areas to buffer noise and air pollution. Re-activating vacant land throughout the neighborhood will aid in reducing illegal dumping as community members become more invested in these lots as community resources. A neighborhood toolkit regarding action and stewardship of vacant lots would be an invaluable tool to promote this transition. Managing unused land to best filter and collect water can reduce flood risk and contribute to the hydrological function of Hunting Bayou. Finally, eliminating concrete slabs and other abandoned infrastructure in right-of-ways and on vacant land, while taking measures to green these spaces, will promote lower local temperatures and will also increase the hydrological health of the region.



Various strategies can help with issues such as contamination and deferred maintenance in Kashmere Gardens.

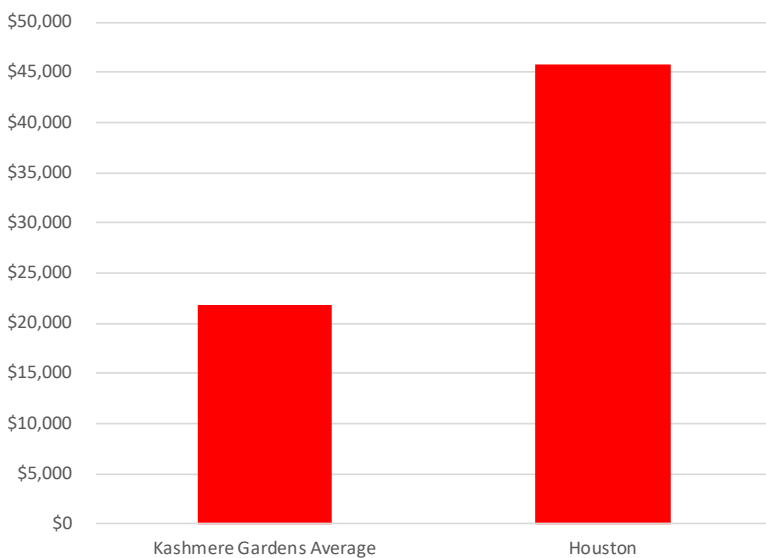
6. SUPPORT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

SUPPORTING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS ESSENTIAL TO ENHANCING THE ECONOMIC STABILITY OF THE PEOPLE WITHIN THE STUDY AREA. INVESTMENT CAN BE TARGETED BY EXAMINING THE JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY.

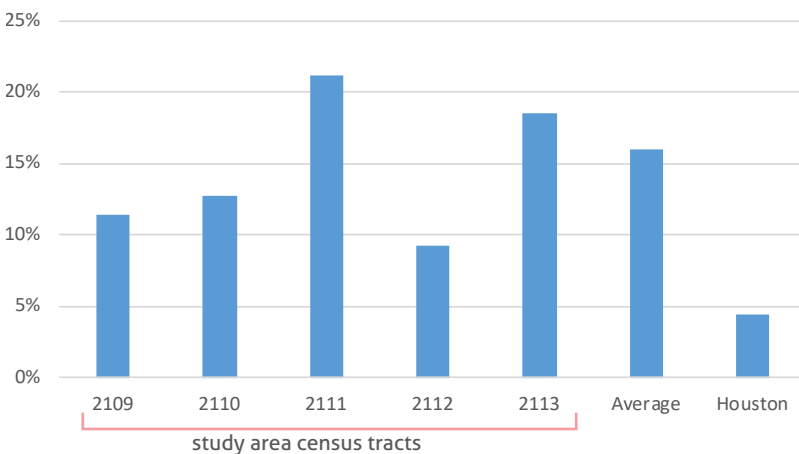
KEY INSIGHTS

Kashmere Gardens has historically been a thriving community with a strong commercial and cultural center. Today, however, economic development is a significant challenge in the study area, despite Houston's strong overall economy.

MEDIAN INCOME (2014)

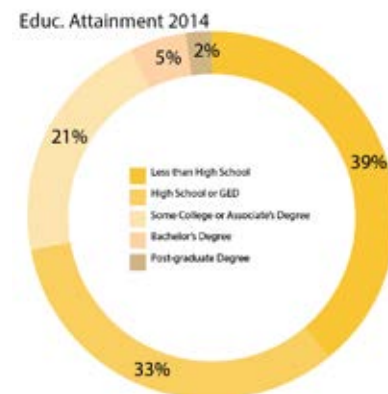


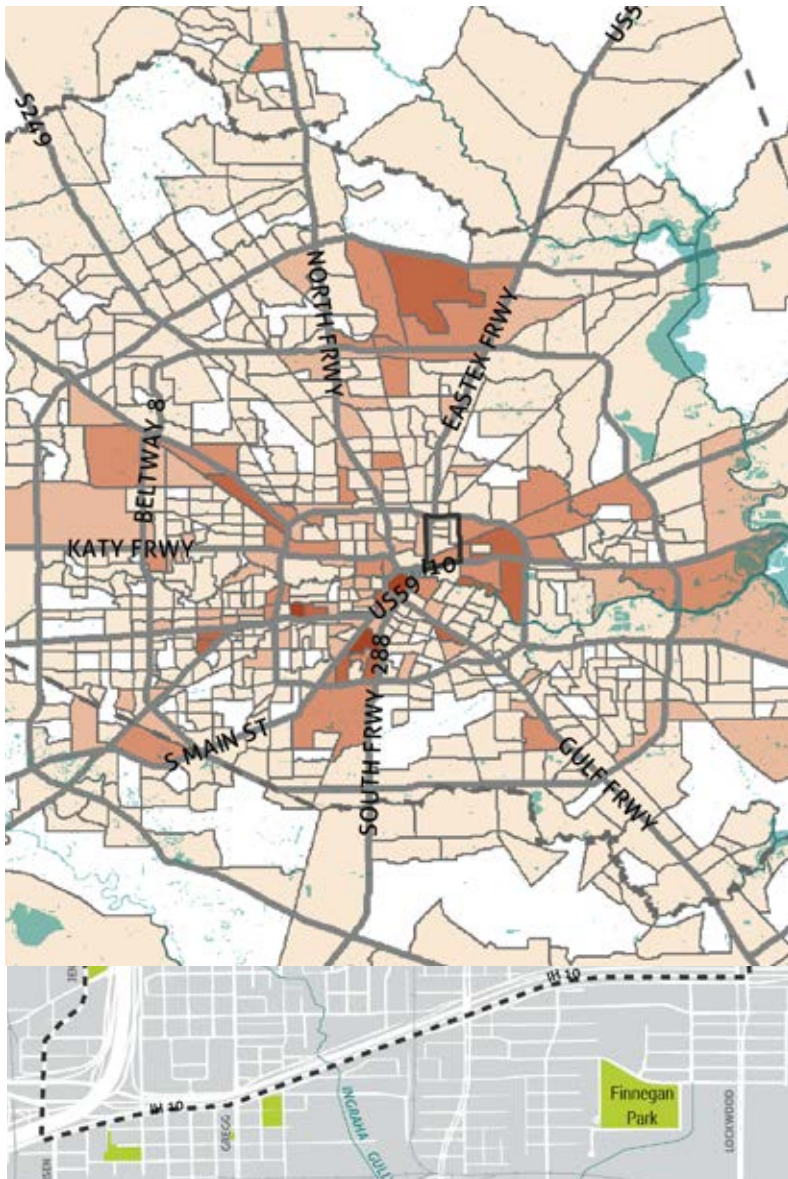
UNEMPLOYMENT (2015)



Above: Lyons Avenue was a thriving commercial corridor and the center of the community in 1956. Since then many of the businesses have closed, and residents have moved away. In recent years, however, the area has begun to undergo a 'renaissance,' with strategic reinvestment in historic businesses, and the reopening of the DeLuxe Theater on Lyons Avenue.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2014)





PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT

Residents of Kashmere Gardens work in a variety of locations around Houston, with the most job concentrated in Downtown Houston, the Texas Medical Center, Airports, and industrial areas in northwest and east Houston.

LEGEND



The area's median income is \$21,859 – less than half of the median income of Houston as a whole and significantly below the federal poverty threshold for a family of four. The overall unemployment rate in Kashmere Gardens is over 15%, extremely high in comparison with Houston's overall unemployment rate, which is slightly under 5%.



EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Education and Medical institutions employ almost 20% of the study area's residents, and significant portion of residents work in construction, manufacturing, or transportation warehousing.

While Houston's economy is projected to grow rapidly over the next 20 years, most of these jobs will be in areas that require some sort of higher education or technical knowledge.

RESOURCES AND STAKEHOLDERS

While employment and education are significant challenges, Kashmere Gardens and its residents have numerous opportunities to draw on for capacity building. Houston's strong economy — especially its low unemployment rate and projected job growth — is a significant advantage for successful workforce training and capacity building programs.

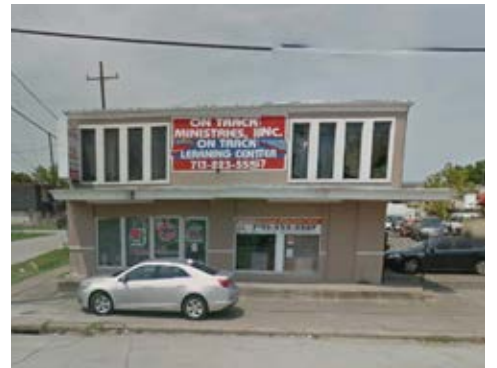
The Kashmere High School, located just north of the study area, is both a significant cultural landmark and a huge potential resource for workforce development. The school has a large Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) magnet program, and has developed strong partnerships with Houston Community College (HCC). The school partners with HCC to give students the opportunity to earn college credits and graduate with an Associate's Degree.

In addition to building the capacity of residents to retain employment outside the study area, there is significant potential for small-scale community entrepreneurship. The reopening of the DeLuxe Theater, which hosts community events and seminars in addition to performances, is an example of how local organizations are building on the areas rich history and potential for community entrepreneurship.

There are numerous federal and local resources that local organizations, investors, and small business can draw upon to help rehabilitate commercial buildings, procure small business loans, and receive small business training.

LOCAL BUSINESSES ►

Local businesses in Kashmere Gardens include convenience stores, tax preparation assistance options, beauty supply stores, fast-food options, salons, auto maintenance shops, tutoring services, and a skating rink. More service options are needed for local residents, particularly related to fresh food access.



INSIGHTS AND ANALYSIS

Kashmere Gardens has a very high level of unemployment and a relatively low level of educational attainment. However, the population is relatively young — almost one third of the population is less than 18 years old — and the area has a significant asset in Kashmere High. It will be important to understand the opportunities for local youth that Kashmere High currently provides through its STEM program and partnerships with HCC, and how the Management District can help build on those resources. Kashmere's partnership with HCC may also be an opportunity to help provide greater opportunities for older residents.

Houston's overall economy is strong, and the region is predicted to add almost 700,000 jobs by 2022 (Greater Houston Partnership). In addition to workforce training, it will be important to connect residents to employment opportunities through informal networks as well as formal programs run by larger employers.

Understanding where these jobs are and will be located, and ensuring good access via transit and other modes of transportation can be invaluable resources to help residents find and retain employment.

In addition to helping residents access jobs across Houston, there are also opportunities to attract new businesses and enable local entrepreneurs. Access to healthy food and the power of the community to support local entrepreneurs were both discussed at length by the Kashmere Gardens Super Neighborhood Group. Strategies to encourage local entrepreneurs and meet community needs might include: improving existing business by creating better access to small business loans, healthy corner store pilot programs, infrastructure improvements near local businesses, facade improvement programs, and new market spaces with affordable options for entrepreneurs.



During community engagement, job training was one of many ideas introduced by the public.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The focus of the first engagement meeting was workforce training and employment opportunities. Participants were asked to discuss their ideal jobs and consider what resources would be most helpful in finding, retaining, or moving up in their job of choice.

Participants emphasized the importance of training for "middle skill" jobs, such as technicians and nurses. While trucking/transportation and manufacturing jobs were seen as a viable option, residents clearly preferred education, medical and management jobs both for their earning potential as well as opportunities for career advancement and potential to improve the community.

7. PROMOTE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

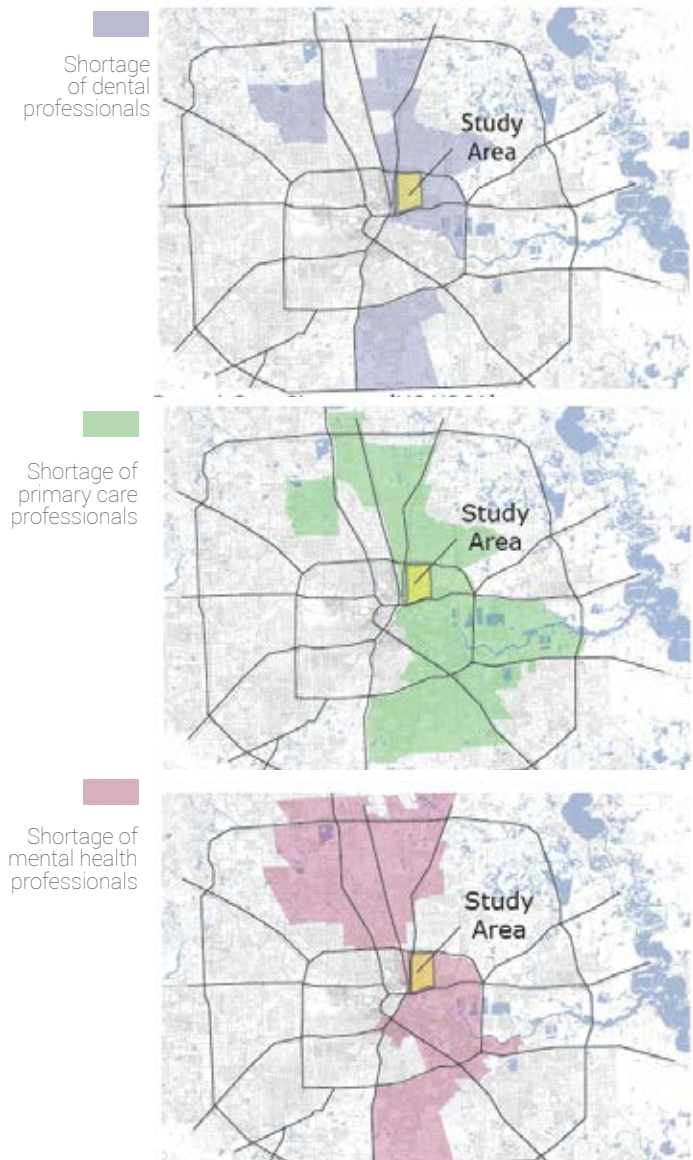
REDUCE HEALTH DISPARITIES BY INCREASING ACCESS TO NECESSARY SERVICES AND INCREASING OPPORTUNITY FOR HEALTHY FOOD AND ACTIVITY CHOICES

KEY FINDINGS

The Kashmere Gardens neighborhood suffers from significantly higher rates of health issues as compared with Houston as a whole. Kashmere Gardens lies within a health professional shortage area for all three categories designated by the US HRSA: dental care services, mental health care services, and primary care services. A lack of healthy food options both in grocery stores and restaurants exacerbates community health concerns as does a shortage of park space and opportunities for active living.

Healthcare

The study area for the Kashmere Gardens Livable Centers study is within Community Health Area B. According to the 2014 Community Health Profile completed by the Houston Department of Health and Human Services, higher proportions of residents in Area B reported having coronary heart disease (5.3%) and stroke (4.1%) than residents in the City of Houston and the residents in Harris County. A higher proportion of adults in Area B are diagnosed with high blood pressure. Almost 50 percent of 18 to 44 years old were considered obese compared to 28.0 percent in the City of Houston. A higher proportion of those 45 to 64 years old were considered obese in Area B (50.9%) than the same age in the City of Houston (32.7%). For both males and females, rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis are higher in Area B as compared to Houston/Harris County. In 2010, the rate of people living with HIV was higher in Area B than Harris County (762.4 per 100,000 population vs. 484.3 per 100,000 population). During 2011, the rate of newly diagnosed cases of HIV infections was 56.0 per 100,000 population in Area B and 30.0 per 100,000 population in Harris County. A higher proportion of females in Area B (14.0%) experienced severe psychological distress during the past 12 months than females in Harris County (10.1%).



ACCESS TO HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Kashmere Gardens has a shortage of various types of health officials. Shaded areas indicate shortages of (from top to bottom): dental professionals, primary care professionals, and mental health care professionals.



Healthy Food

Seven supermarkets exist within or adjacent to the Kashmere Gardens study area ranging from small shops resembling neighborhood convenience stores, to medium-sized meat markets and large chain grocery stores such as Fiesta Mart. Many of the existing restaurants lack a variety of healthy food options. Only 22.7 percent of adults in Area B are meeting nutritional guidelines for fruits and vegetable intake.



NEIGHBORHOOD GROCERY OPTIONS

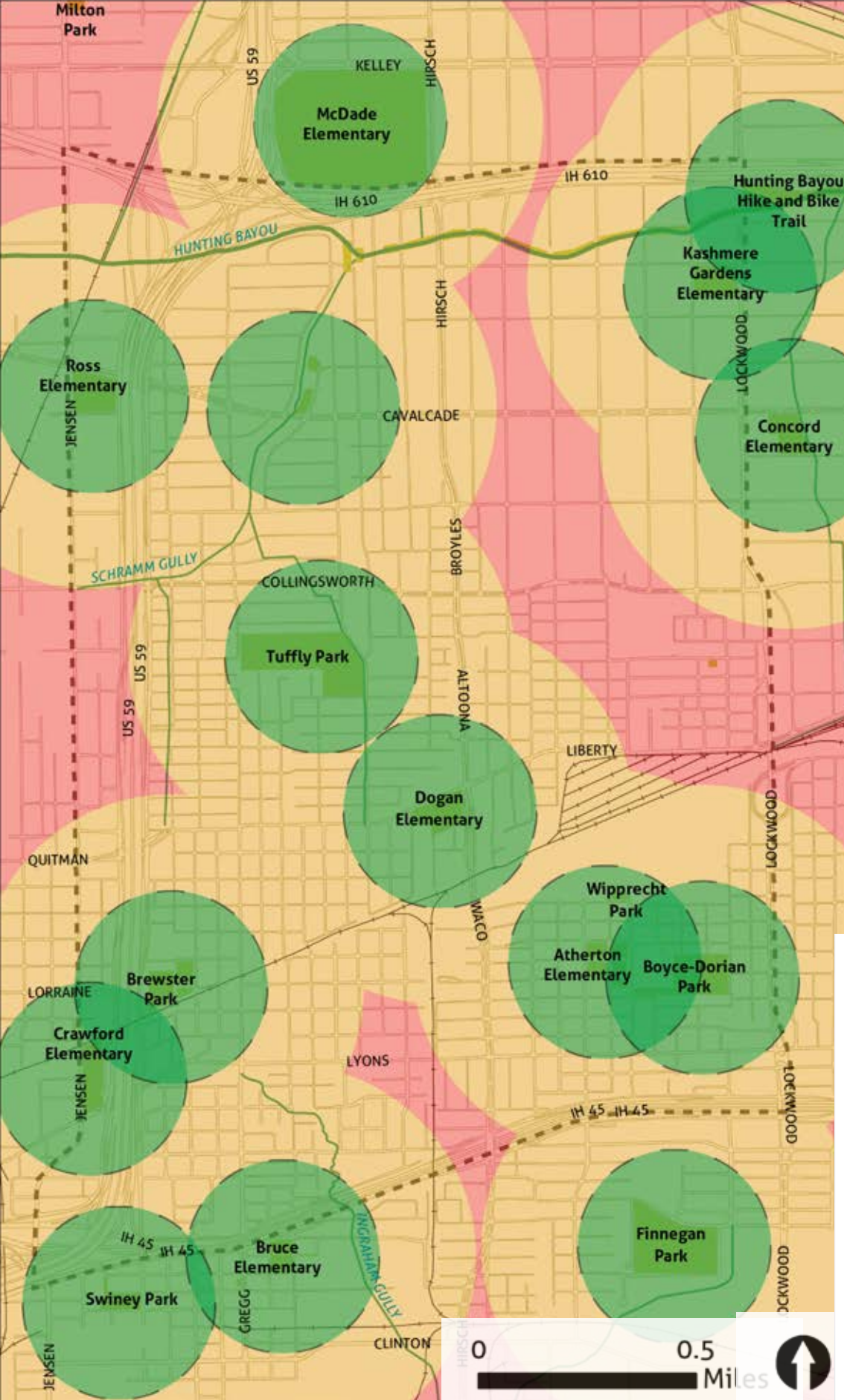
Top - Fiesta Mart; middle - Sing-On Supermarket; bottom - Quick Saver Supermarket

Food Access



Open Space Access

According to the 2014 Community Health Survey, less than half of Area B residents (40.1%) are meeting recommended levels of physical activity compared to 43.5 percent in the City of Houston. The 2015 City of Houston Parks Master Plan states that 37% of the respondents in this Park Sector engage in a moderate physical activity for 5 or more days a week, which is higher than that of the entire city (32%). The national initiative, Healthy People 2020, has a goal to increase the amount of adults who engage in moderate physical activity for at least 5 days a week for 30 minutes to 47.9% of the population. The current national average of adults engaging in this level of aerobic activity is 43.5%. Finally, the survey shows that 24.9% of the population does not engage in moderate physical activity at all, which is about the slightly higher than the rate for the entire city (21.2%).

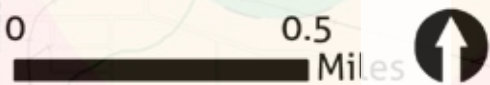


PARK ACCESSIBILITY

Many parts of the study area are outside of a 0.25 mile walk radius; some parts are identified as high need based on their placement over 0.5 miles away from any park space.

LEGEND

- Study Area
- Park accessibility needs met - Park within 0.25 miles
- Intermediate need - Park within 0.5 miles
- Highest need - over 0.5 miles from a park
- Bayous
- Parks
- Creeks & Streams
- Edge of Pavement
- Railroads



RESOURCES AND STAKEHOLDERS

Community health resources include the Houston Health Department, Harris County Public Health, the Kashmere Gardens Multi-Service Center, and the Houston Parks Board.

ANALYSIS AND INSIGHTS

Healthcare: Kashmere Gardens is considered a health professional shortage area for mental health care services, primary care services, and dental care services (HRSA).

Food: Kashmere Gardens is categorized as a community with low to poor access to healthy, affordable food (MRFEI)

Park Accessibility: In order for Kashmere Gardens to have an equitable parks system, more parks and more of certain amenities is required.

POTENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Partnerships with local health institutions should be strengthened to encourage expansion of mental health, dental, and primary care services in the area. Vacant parcels near highway exits can be redeveloped to attract larger grocery stores and health care facilities. Vacant parcels in high need areas can be acquired and redeveloped as park space.

8: BUILD CAPACITY

BUILD THE CAPACITY OF THE NEAR NORTHSIDE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

KEY FINDINGS

The Near Northside Management District was authorized by the Texas Legislature in 2011. Since then, it has been largely operated by a volunteer Board with legal and operational assistance from several Texas House staff members, but with no full-time staff members responsible for operations and programming.

As a Management District, the NNMD is funded largely by assessments on commercial property, although it also has the ability to leverage additional grants and loans in addition to its base revenue generated by assessments. Because Kashmere Gardens has few active commercial properties and is a largely residential area, the NNMD's assessment revenue is limited. This means that building capacity to leverage outside funding for staffing and programs is an important short-term goal.

To create longer-term sustainability, allocating some of this capacity and funding toward attracting additional commercial development within the NNMD boundaries (which are the same as the Kashmere Gardens study area boundaries) will also be a central objective.

STRATEGIES TO EXPLORE

Communications: Many management districts maintain a Web presence that allows them to communicate their plans, activities, and resources with the residents, employers, and employees in the areas that they serve. Establishing a website for the NNMD would allow the district to update its constituents

on successes and share information about upcoming events, programs, and other items of interest for community members.

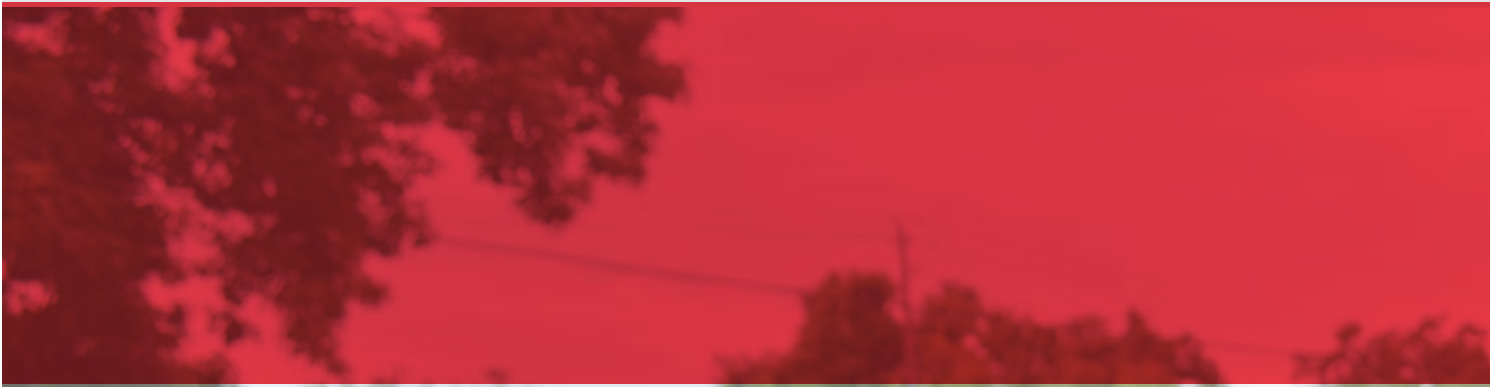
Branding: Neighborhood- and district-based branding strategies can help improve and unify local public realm and streetscape elements, attract businesses and visitors, and create a sense of local identity.

Staffing and Funding: Staffing and funding the NNMD's operations during the start-up period with lower amounts of commercial revenue needs to be a priority. Creating sustainable programs will require a higher level of staff support. Examining opportunities to leverage public dollars, as well as grant sources through the NNMD Foundation, could assist in funding new staff capacity.

Leveraging Investment: Leveraging federal and state investment toward completing public realm and public amenity projects with high-quality landscape and streetscape standards can create increased quality of life for the residents of Kashmere Gardens.



A strong Management District can help facilitate public improvements.



CONCEPTUAL PLAN/ RECOMMENDATIONS

After fully analyzing existing conditions for each of the eight subject areas, performing site observations, and consulting with the community and the Advisory Committee, the project team developed a set of recommendations with prioritized strategies that form a basis for action by the Near Northside Management District, stakeholders, and community partners. Each recommendation is grouped into one of the eight subject areas that form the foundation for the plan, and also includes an indication of the type of recommendation according to the project team's Sticky Solutions framework.

STICKY SOLUTIONS

Sticky Solutions are long term solutions that address issues with a multifaceted approach, combining three different strategies that reinforce each other.



Programs:

Educate, build awareness, and encourage behaviors to change



Projects:

Create inviting settings and an environment for activity



Policies:

Rewrite the rules and our culture to institutionalize the new norms

Top-priority Action Items from the Conceptual Plan are enumerated as the Action Plan in the Executive Summary of this report - these are the items that community members and stakeholders felt were of maximum importance for short-term action to build a foundation for long-term success in Kashmere Gardens. The other items in the Conceptual Plan can be incorporated into future workplans.

GOAL 1: ENSURE THAT THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS FROM NEW INVESTMENT

Housing and commercial real estate markets in Kashmere Gardens have experienced disinvestment, though the long-term outlook for the area is strong. Investment in Kashmere Gardens needs to be targeted and strategic to ensure existing community members benefit from improvements, while bringing back the bustling entrepreneurial atmosphere of years past.

1.1: CREATE AN OVERALL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY TO INFORM PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

Local and City-wide developers and CDC's

COH

Management District

With a convenient location near Downtown Houston, Kashmere Gardens is likely to face long-term market change and appreciation in value. Residents and stakeholders are very clear that they want to leverage this long-term change to benefit existing and future residents, while also focusing on meeting immediate needs for food access, retail development, and high-quality housing options. The Near Northside Management District is ideally situated to define and maintain a development strategy for Kashmere Gardens that can bring together community stakeholders with the public and private sector to meet these goals. During the community engagement process, residents and stakeholders expressed agreement about the following key development opportunity areas that form the foundation of a vision for Kashmere Gardens' future.

Redevelop large properties at highway exits as commercial areas to generate jobs and revenue.

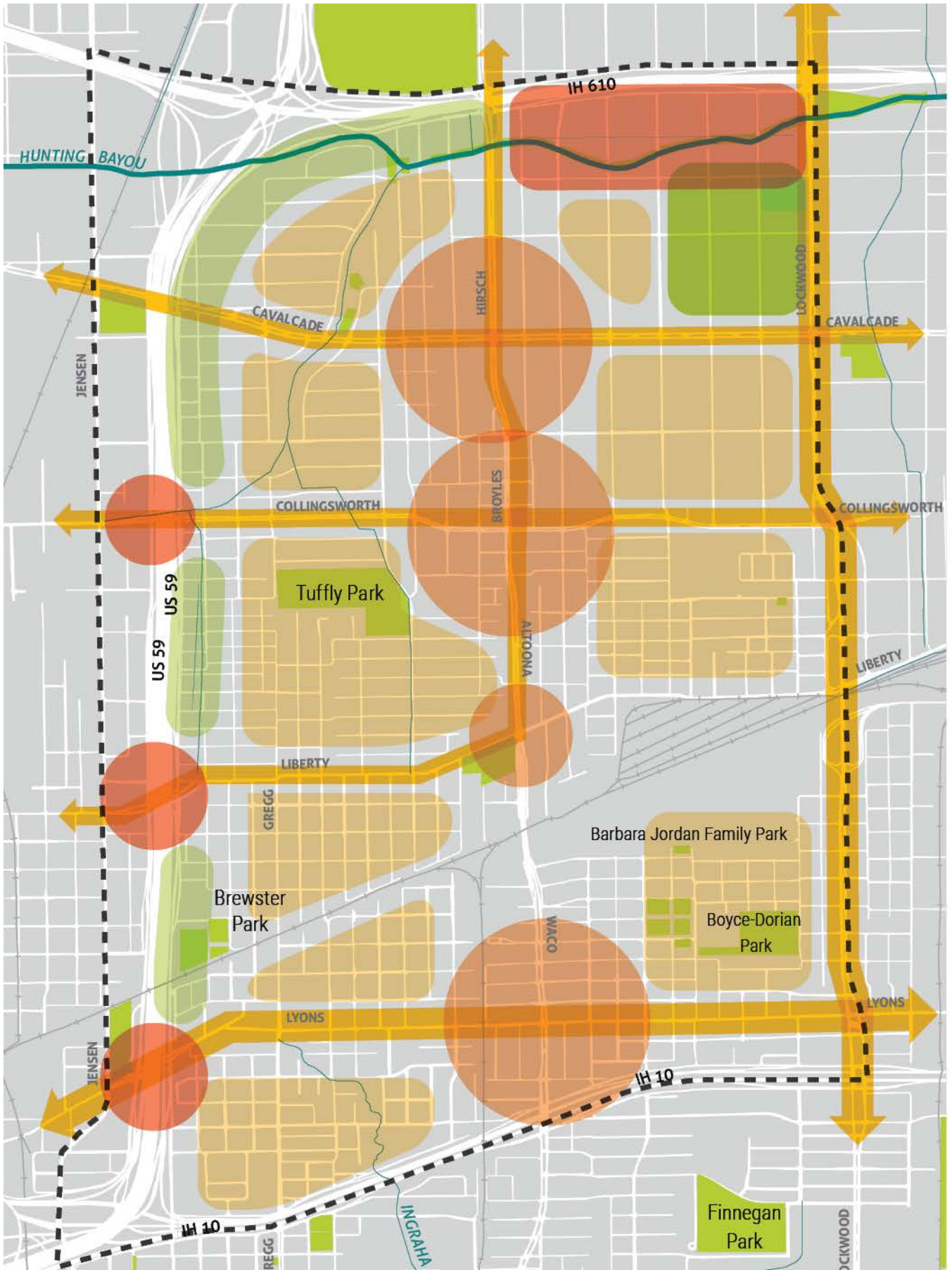
Highway exits offer opportunities to develop new commercial and retail assets that can serve community residents as well as the large potential customer base of commuters and travelers using US-59 and I-610 on a daily basis. Generally, retailers look at traffic counts and local population as key factors in deciding whether to build a store at a particular location; larger retailers like grocery stores and big-box stores also look for large contiguous sites (2+ acres). Identifying large sites near current highway exits, or exits planned through the future North Houston Highway Improvement Program, for redevelopment opportunities and actively working to attract retailers to these areas is an important function of the Management District.

Encourage mixed-use infill development at key intersections to build on existing community assets.

Key intersections along the Hirsch/Altoona and Lockwood corridors should be a focus for mixed-use development that builds on existing commercial development and community assets like the Kashmere Multi-Service Center. The Management District should seek to partner with community development corporations (CDCs) and others with experience creating mixed-use, mixed-income development in the Houston region in order to ensure that these developments bring opportunity for residents at multiple income levels.

Preserve and add to the stock of high-quality housing at a price point affordable to residents and their families in neighborhood areas.

Working to preserve the existing, highly affordable single-family housing stock through home repair opportunities for residents will be critical to maintaining long-term affordability, but residents and stakeholders also believe that new housing options available at a variety of income levels will be important assets for the neighborhood. Creating a community-based system for marketing to relatives, church attendees in the neighborhood, and others can assist in bringing new residents to the neighborhood who may be choosing between a location convenient to Downtown job centers like Kashmere Gardens and a more suburban location.



-  Redevelop large properties at highway exits as commercial areas to generate jobs and revenue
-  Encourage mixed-use infill development at key intersections to build on existing community assets
-  Preserve and add to the stock of high quality affordable housing in neighborhood areas
-  Strategically cultivate vacant lots as open space buffers and recreational opportunities
-  Enhance existing transit corridors with multimodal improvements and infill development
-  Enhance local corridors through infill development and multifamily housing.

Strategically cultivate vacant lots as open space buffers and recreational opportunities.

Vacant land in Kashmere Gardens can become an asset rather than a liability if used as a planted buffer zone for highways, rail yards, and other infrastructure, or if used as recreational assets such as small “pocket parks” for the neighborhood. Both of these strategies contribute to community health: planting trees in vacant lots near highways helps to filter pollution from the air, while making more recreational opportunities available encourages active living for local children, families, and seniors. One example of a recreational opportunity being developed on formerly vacant land is the trail being developed along Hunting Bayou by the Houston Parks Board; the Management District should explore solar lighting opportunities for this trail so that it is safe to use in the early mornings and evenings as well as during the day.









Enhance existing transit corridors with multimodal improvements and infill development.

Transit corridors, including Hirsch/Altoona, Cavalcade, Lockwood, and Lyons, should be focus areas for pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure improvements. These corridors should also be focus areas for infill residential, retail, and mixed-use development that is easily accessible to transit riders and other community members.

Create new local corridors through infill development and multifamily housing.

Local corridors such as Collingsworth and Liberty should become focus areas for infill single- and multi-family housing development that restores vacant properties and provides new housing options that can attract residents to the Kashmere Gardens area.

LEGEND

-  Freeway On & Off Ramps
-  Study Area
-  Parks
-  Water Features
-  Bayous
-  Creeks & Streams
-  Edge of Pavement
-  Railroads



1.2. APPLY COMPLETE COMMUNITIES PRINCIPLES TO THE VISION FOR KASHMERE GARDENS' FUTURE.

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

Community-based organizations

Rebuilding Together

Local volunteer groups

Management District

The City of Houston has prioritized a “complete communities” viewpoint within their neighborhood development and planning work - to ensure that each neighborhood has all the assets and opportunities that generate growth and prosperity for all residents. According to Reconnecting America’s 2012 report, “Are We There Yet? Creating Complete Communities for 21st Century America,” complete communities should include:

“a quality education, access to good jobs, an affordable roof over our heads, access to affordable healthy food and health services, the ability to enjoy artistic, spiritual and cultural amenities, access to recreation and parks, meaningful civic engagement, and affordable transportation choices that get us where we need to go.”(1)

Applying Complete Communities principles to Kashmere Gardens’ long-term development requires a focus on bringing stakeholders together to achieve desired outcomes in development, job access, education, recreation, and more. It also requires the efficient use of City, management district, and other public-sector resources to generate inclusive development that benefits existing residents and attracts new private-sector resources to the area.



(1) Reconnecting America, “Are We There Yet? Creating Complete Communities for 21st Century America,” 2012, p. 3.



LIVING

CREATE AND PRESERVE COMMUNITIES THAT PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING, INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS, AND QUALITY EDUCATION



WORKING

TO ENHANCE REGIONAL ECONOMIC PROSPERITY THROUGH JOBS, TRAINING AND EDUCATION ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO RETAIN AND ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES



MOVING

TO PROMOTE INCREASING AND IMPROVING MOVEMENT AROUND THE REGION USING PUBLIC TRANSIT, ELECTRIC CARS, AND ENCOURAGING WALKING AND BICYCLING TO ACHIEVE BETTER PHYSICAL WELL-BEING



THRIVING

TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES THAT PROVIDE ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS, ARTS, RECREATION, AND ENTERTAINMENT, WHICH MAKE US HAPPY AND FEEL MEANINGFUL THROUGH ACTIVE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

GOAL 2: INCREASE HIGH QUALITY HOUSING OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS OF ALL INCOME LEVELS

Much of the housing stock in Kashmere Gardens is aging, and improvements to existing stock as well as new housing investments are needed to promote housing choice and provide housing options that appeal to all ages. Opportunities are needed for both existing residents and potential new residents.

2.1 ATTRACT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING TO JUMP START THE HOUSING MARKET

FUNDING HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT FOR KASHMERE GARDENS



Public-sector agencies and community development organizations working together can create high-quality, affordable housing options for residents of Kashmere Gardens.

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

- LARA
- CDFI's w/ IDA programs
- Philanthropic partners
- Banks with CRA obligations
- Management District

As an affordable community close to Houston's downtown and within the I-610 loop, Kashmere Gardens is an area that is primed to attract private-sector resources in the next five to ten years. Channeling these resources toward an inclusive development strategy requires thinking ahead to ensure that existing residents can remain in the area and benefit from change, and that new development reflects the community's character and vision. The Near Northside Management District can play a critical role in leveraging public-sector and non-profit resources to speed up the attraction of private-sector capital that fulfills community priorities, such as quality mixed-use development and new single-family housing options – while also planning for the future to help existing residents stay in place through innovative home repair and savings programs. Some key opportunities for attracting public and private funding include:

Partner with Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority (LARA):

LARA is an authority dedicated to bringing tax-foreclosed properties back into commerce for the benefit of Houston's communities and neighborhoods. LARA is able to offer land at discounted rates to local builders who build high-quality, well-priced housing, but it is restricted to taking action within its target neighborhoods. Currently, the northern boundary of LARA's work in the Kashmere Gardens study area is Collingsworth Ave; the Management District and local stakeholders should work with the LARA Board and the City of Houston to expand the LARA boundary north to I-610 in order to enable LARA to serve the full study area and target

tax-delinquent properties that can help meet the goals of the overall Kashmere Gardens development strategy.

Coordinate Housing Actions with Public Realm Investments:

In Houston, private investment in housing and commercial properties is usually motivated by increases in land value in a local area. As the Management District invests in the neighborhood's public realm, safety, and other assets, land values nearby will increase. Using the overall development strategy to target investments in the public realm along potential transit-oriented development corridors and near highway exits will help promote the types of housing and retail development that residents of Kashmere Gardens are hoping to see.

Promote Individual Development Accounts for Renters:

When prices appreciate in an area, renters are often the first ones to experience increased housing costs. However, unlike owners, renters do not receive complementary benefits in increased property value and family wealth. Helping renters buy into the Kashmere Gardens neighborhood is therefore an important goal to make sure they can benefit from increasing values rather than being displaced. One helpful resource is an Individual Development Account (IDA), which encourages renters to save for goals like homeownership or education by matching each dollar they save at a specified rate. Connecting renters to IDA programs offered by Covenant Community Capital or other Houston institutions to help them save for homeownership will help ensure that new development in Kashmere benefits those who have contributed to the community over the long term.

Create a Home Repair Loan Pool:

Helping residents repair the homes they own is a proven strategy for decreasing displacement of current residents as the market changes. One national best practice that has been used in New Orleans and Chattanooga, among other places, is the creation of a targeted loan fund (or "loan pool") that offers small loans of \$10,000-\$20,000 for home repairs that may not be covered by City programs or other resources. Generally, these loan pools are administered by a credit union or community development financial institution (CDFI), and require some type of philanthropic or other contribution to serve as a "reserve fund" or "loan-loss reserve" that can compensate the lender for potential losses, which allows the lender to decrease interest rates and/or help residents with lower credit scores than they otherwise would. As this loan pool builds a track record of success, its size and impact can be increased by pursuing Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) investment from traditional banks.



Renovation of the Gulf Coast Arms apartments in 2014 using Low Income Housing Tax Credit Funds. (Image: The Brownstone Group)



"Rebuilding Northside Together" home repair program operated by Avenue CDC and Rebuilding Together Houston. (Image: Go Neighborhoods)

2.2. DEVELOP A COMMUNITY-BASED HOME REPAIR PROGRAM AND CONNECT RESIDENTS TO CITY HOME REPAIR RESOURCES

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

- Community-based organizations
- Rebuilding Together
- Local volunteer groups
- Management District

The Kashmere Gardens area has many homes that date to the 1940s and 1950s; these older homes often need repairs to address a range of issues, and elderly residents may not have the resources or mobility to upkeep their properties as they once did. This can cause quality of life and safety issues; long-time residents who are facing maintenance challenges also tend to be displaced more rapidly by market change, because they are more vulnerable to accepting low-dollar offers from developers or other potential purchasers.

For minor maintenance issues such as siding, painting, or carpentry, a community-based home repair program can leverage local resources to help elderly and low-income residents perform needed repairs and upkeep for their homes. The "Rebuilding Northside Together" program in the Northside neighborhood is an example of such a program: local non-profit Avenue CDC partnered with non-profit home repair provider Rebuilding Together Houston to establish a volunteer-based program. Avenue CDC was able to secure funding of approximately \$50,000 per year, identify homes in need of repair in the neighborhood, and find local volunteers from churches and other community-based organizations. Rebuilding Together Houston provided training to all volunteer group leaders, inspected the chosen homes to create a scope of work, and purchased materials for each home repair project. Together, these two groups were able to complete approximately 10 homes a year at a cost of approximately \$5,000 per home repaired. Rebuilding Together Houston is open to partnering with additional neighborhood groups to complete similar efforts, and Kashmere Gardens could be a strong candidate for this type of effort.

Community-based home repair programs can help elderly residents stay in their homes. (Image credit Go Neighborhoods)





HOME REPAIR RESOURCES

Resources available for senior (62+) and disabled (receiving disability) homeowners.

Roof Repair:

City of Houston "Minor Critical Emergency Repair" Program has funds for roof repair.

- Must earn less than \$66,450/year (family of 2) - call for other income limits.
- Call **832-394-6200**, then press Option 4 to get on the list today!

Other Home Repairs:

Rebuilding Together Houston can provide:

- Exterior repairs
- Interior repairs of critical systems such as plumbing or electrical needs
- Wheelchair ramps
- Fall prevention (grab bars, etc), and fire prevention (fire extinguishers).

Call **713-659-2511** to speak with an intake specialist. Must earn less than \$44,300/year (family of 2) or \$55,350/year (family of 4) - call for other limits.

Major issues, such as roof repair, structural problems, and plumbing or electrical work are usually too complex to be handled by volunteers. For these issues, the Near Northside Management District should work to ensure residents are aware of available City of Houston home repair programs. Home repair and addressing poor housing conditions is a strong focus of the City's Housing and Community Development Department; roof repair that helps eliminate "blue tarps" in neighborhoods after Hurricane Ike was a focus during this planning process, but other programs are likely to be available in the future.

2.3. INCREASE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION PRESENCE AND CAPACITY

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

COH Housing
& Community
Development

LARA

HAUCDC

Houston Area Urban
League

Fifth Ward CRC

Community development corporations, or CDCs, are non-profit organizations devoted to revitalizing local communities through affordable housing development, economic development, and other programs. The Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation is a highly active CDC in the southern portion of the Livable Centers study area, but the northern part of the study area has fewer active CDCs. The Near Northside Management District should work to partner with successful citywide CDCs, such as HAUCDC (a non-profit CDC affiliated with the Houston Area Urban League), to develop high-quality affordable housing and commercial projects in Kashmere Gardens.



Image: Homebuyer training offered by the Fifth Ward CRC at the DeLuxe Theater in August 2016. (Image: Fifth Ward CRC)

2.4. DEVELOP A RESILIENT HOUSING STRATEGY

One issue that residents of Kashmere Gardens have faced is increasing flood insurance costs due to flooding from Hunting Bayou. The Hunting Bayou improvements that are ongoing through the Flood Control District should help mitigate these challenges. Several ways that the impact of these improvements can be increased include:

- Education about Insurance Reductions: Notify residents about the change in the floodplan improvement and encourage them to contact their insurance agents to ensure that the reduction in risk is reflected in their insurance policies.
- Green Infrastructure for Homes and Buildings: Goal 5 discusses the opportunities for reducing impervious surfaces and using green infrastructure on a neighborhood-wide basis. However, successful programs such as the Front Yard Initiative in New Orleans have also helped homeowners to reduce the amount of impervious surface on their properties and install interventions like rain gardens that enhance property value through beautification and water management.



Homeowner with rain garden constructed by the Front Yard Initiative. (Image: Urban Conservancy)

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

COH Green Building Resource Center
Flood Control District

2.5. COORDINATE WITH THE CITY OF HOUSTON'S HOUSING PLAN EFFORTS

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

COH Housing & Community Development

The City of Houston is working to create a long-term, comprehensive plan for housing that will discuss Houston's housing needs and trends and create recommendations for addressing housing issues in all of the city's neighborhoods. Kashmere Gardens stakeholders should continue to coordinate with the City of Houston as the housing plan effort moves forward, and should work to inform residents about opportunities for public input on the housing plan.



Coordination with City of Houston initiatives is essential.

2.6. CONDUCT OUTREACH ON TAX EXEMPTION PROGRAMS FOR SENIORS, THE DISABLED, AND VETERANS

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

Multi-Service Center
Management District



Educating residents about existing programs can help make use of these advantages. (Image: COD Newsroom)

A variety of property tax exemptions and reductions are available to Houston residents aged 65 or more, and residents who are disabled. Many of these property tax reductions require an application process in order for residents to qualify. The Management District should work with other local organizations like the Kashmere Multi-Service Center to ensure that seniors, the disabled, and disabled veterans receive information about the following programs and deadlines for application.

Property Tax Exemption for Seniors:

Seniors over 65 are entitled to a \$160,000 exemption on their property taxes for their principal residence from the City of Houston. In order to receive the exemption, homeowners must apply to the Harris County Appraisal District (HCAD) within a year after their 65th birthday.

Disability Tax Exemption:

Disabled homeowners are also entitled to a property tax exemption of up to \$160,000 for their principal residence and must apply for the exemption within a year of becoming disabled or purchasing a new property.

Disabled Veteran Tax Exemptions:

Disabled veterans are eligible for exemptions of varying sizes depending on their level of disability.

GOAL 3: LEVERAGE OPPORTUNITIES CREATED BY EXISTING LARGE INFRASTRUCTURE

Currently, Kashmere Gardens is home to several large pieces of infrastructure that burden the community. Coordinating efforts to capitalize on bayous, railroads and highway that currently serve as barriers is key.

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

Design Consultant

Mayor's Office
of Economic
Development

COH Department of
Public Works and
Engineering

H-GAC

Management District

3.1 DESIGNATE GATEWAYS TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD, IDENTIFY SITES FOR NEW RETAIL AND DEVELOP A PUBLIC REALM URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY.

Public investments in a neighborhood's built environment can produce a range of positive impacts, such as new, private-sector residential and commercial investment, and improved public safety. Examples include redesigning and rebuilding streets, upgrading sidewalks, and adding signage and street lights. Given the high expense of these types of improvements, however, it is useful to concentrate them in strategic locations where public investment is most likely to stimulate private reinvestment in the neighborhood, such as home building and renovation, and business growth. Strategic areas are those with the most automobile and foot-traffic – which attracts retailers – existing anchors and institutions, and gateways to adjacent neighborhoods.

One benefit of having a limited number of entry ways to a neighborhood, such as the highway- and railroad-ringed Kashmere Gardens, is that most traffic neighborhood into and out of the funnels these handful of neighborhood "gateways." Gateways are therefore strategic locations for making public improvements. Potential locations, along with average daily traffic measurements and the year counted, are:

- Cavalcade Avenue at the Eastex Freeway (17,236 ADT, 2016), to be coordinated with the expansion of the Hardy Tollway.
- Quitman Street (Liberty Road) at Eastex Freeway (10,438 ADT, 2012)
- Lockwood Avenue at Interstate 610 (19,017 ADT, 2016)



Proposed neighborhood gateway concept

Each of these strategic locations sites have vacant land that is marketable due to the relatively high levels of traffic and ease of access to the Eastex Freeway and Interstates 610 and 10. These sites may be redeveloped to offer the types of uses for which residents voiced support during the planning process, including food retailers, incubator office spaces, and other retail options. The Management District should take a two-pronged public-investment approach to redeveloping them in conjunction with neighborhood gateways:

1. Make the street an attractive and safe place to travel and at which to gather, and
2. Market the adjacent vacant properties to potential developers










Public investments in the right-of-way, such as sidewalk reconstruction, street trees, landmark signage, and other lighting, can be offered as an incentive to those redeveloping vacant property.

The initial funding priority for this task would be to fund design and engineering study for specific treatments, such as roadway reallocation (See Recommendation 3.3), and streetscaping. The designs should not be site specific, but conform to a theme that distinguishes Kashmere Gardens from other Houston neighborhoods.

To make streetscape improvements, the Management District together with H-GAC should coordinate with the City of Houston to allocate funding for their design, engineering and construction. Meanwhile, it should work with the Mayor's Office of Economic Development to identify incentives and recruit investors into the target sites. Any gateway improvements will require plans approved by the City of Houston Public Works and Engineering Department.

-  Enhance existing transit corridors with multimodal improvements and infill development
-  Create new local corridors through infill development and multifamily housing.
-  Redevelop large properties at highway exits as commercial areas to generate jobs and revenue

LEGEND

-  Freeway On & Off Ramps
-  Study Area
-  Parks
-  Water Features
-  Bayous
-  Creeks & Streams
-  Edge of Pavement
-  Railroads
-  Miles



Infill development locations.

RECOMMENDATION 3:2 IMPROVE QUIET ZONES AND GRADE SEPARATIONS

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

COH Department of Public Works and Engineering

H-GAC

Management District

Rail crossings within the Near Northside Management District have varying degrees of adequacies and inadequacies. There are two vehicular bridges over each end of the Englewood Yard Union Pacific Railroad Terminal. The portion of the terminal within the district represents just the tail end of the terminal. The major area of the terminal is approximately three times the size of the tail and is located to the east of the district. Additionally, Englewood Terminal operates 24 hours a day causing extended traffic delays at railroad crossing and affecting homes and businesses near railroad tracks with train horns that can be loud distractions during the day and interrupt sleep at night. Where vehicular crossings can not be accommodated, alternative locations for bicycle or pedestrian crossings should be examined.

The Lockwood Bridge at Liberty Road has poor and unsafe pedestrian access and no

bicycle or handicap accommodations. The stairway is open to the elements, does not accommodate bicycles or the disabled, there are no sidewalks at the base of the stairs, and no lighting. The sidewalk on the bridge proper does not meet current standards, is too narrow, and unsafe for non-motorized passage over the bridge. The Lockwood Bridge needs to be retrofit for pedestrian, bicycle and handicapped access. At a minimum the stairways on either end of the bridge need to have ramps per specifications of the Americans with Disability Act for non-motorized access.

The Waco Street Bridge crossing the western end of the rail terminal has access ramps for pedestrians, bicycles, and wheelchairs. There is also a separated walkway on the bridge for pedestrians, bicycles, and handicap access in addition to sidewalks on the ground leading to the ramps. However there does not appear to be lighting. Lighting should be added to this bridge.



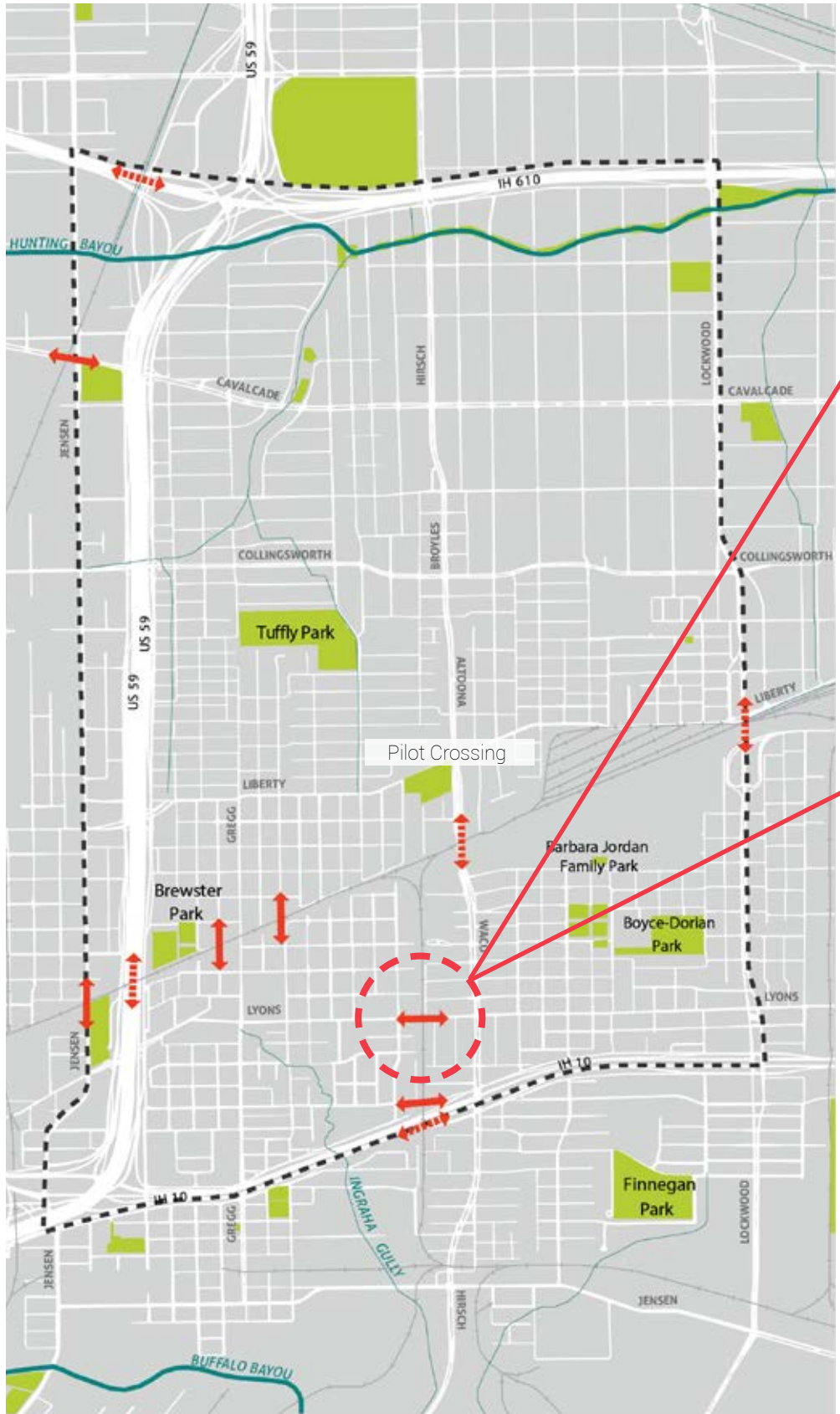
The Bringham Street bridge is under construction with both accessible ramps and safety cages.

Immediately west of Waco Street bridge is a rail interchange. A double track rail line continues southeast and a single track separates south along St. Elmo Street. The single track spur has no grade separations and is in proximity to residential housing and churches. There are open areas where people, particular children cross at will as a shortcut. The signs are not a deterrent, so improvements should be made to this crossing. At Bringhurst Street there is a new pedestrian bridge being built over the at-grade crossing. At the time of this writing it is unknown if a bridge for motorized vehicular will be added to the crossing or not.












The Waco Street crossing is accessible for wheelchairs and bicycles, but does not have lighting (top right). The Lockwood Street bridge over Liberty Road (top) has exposed stairs and poor sidewalk conditions. Signs marking at grade crossings are not a strong enough deterrent from crossing (right).





LEGEND

-  Grade-separated Crossings
-  At-grade crossings
-  Study Area
-  Parks
-  Water Features
-  Bayous
-  Creeks & Streams
-  Edge of Pavement
-  Railroads



The Waco Street crossing already has certain elements making crossing easier for pedestrians and bicycles, and with a few improvements could be used as a pilot quiet zone.

Steps should be taken to establish quiet zones in the Kashmere Gardens. Quiet zones require engineers to only sound train horns for emergencies or safety concerns, such as people walking near the tracks. Requirements to establish a 'quiet zone' include mitigation measures to offset the increased risk caused by the absence of a horn. These measures will help improve safety within the Kashmere neighborhood specifically due to the absence of adequate safety measures existing today. Every public grade crossing in a quiet zone must be equipped at minimum with the standard or conventional automatic warning devices (i.e. flashing lights and gates). Guidance on how to establish a 'Quiet Zone' are included in the Appendix

Only local governments or public agencies can establish a quiet zone, it must be at least ½ mile in length, and have at least one public highway-rail grade crossing. Communities have the option to establish partial quiet zones restricting locomotive horn sounding during overnight hours between 10:00 P.M. to 7:00 A.M. Under the Train Horn

Rule (49 CFR Part 222), locomotive engineers must begin to sound train horns at least 15 seconds, and no more than 20 seconds, in advance of all public grade crossings. The final rule also provides an opportunity for localities nationwide to mitigate the effects of train horn noise by establishing "new quiet zones." "No horn" restriction which may have existed prior to the establishment of the rule may be qualified to be "pre-rule quiet zones". In a quiet zone, railroads have been directed to cease the routine sounding their horns when approaching public highway-rail grade crossings. Train horns may still be used in emergency situations or to comply with other Federal regulations or railroad operating rules. Localities desiring to establish a quiet zone are first required to mitigate the increased risk caused by the absence of a horn.

The management district and other partners should establish a 'quiet zone' for the southern spur from the rail interchange along St Elmo Street to 110 east Freeway; a distance of 3500 feet (1.07 km), which equals approximately 0.63 miles.

3.3 RIGHT-SIZE MAJOR THOROUGHFARES AND CONTINUE NEIGHBORHOOD STREET IMPROVEMENTS.

Kashmere Gardens' thoroughfares are currently designed and built to move much more automobile traffic than exists, or is likely to exist in the short-to-medium term. By transforming these thoroughfares into "complete streets," Kashmere Gardens' public right-of-way will become safer and more attractive not just for moving, but for residents to gather in public, thereby adding more life to neighborhood streets. This strategy, consistent with the City's Complete Streets Executive Order, can be accomplished by reallocating excess roadway space from exclusive use for automobiles to use by cyclists, pedestrians and transit riders.

Per the Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan (MTFP), 2-lane roads are adequate to accommodate average daily traffic loads up to 16,000. To safely accommodate all modes of travel, roadway reallocations that consider the needs of all users should therefore be considered on all study area roadways with four or more lanes and ADT loads less than 16,000. These include Cavalcade Street, Hirsch/Broyles/Altoona/Waco Streets, Collingsworth Street, Gregg Street south of New Orleans, Jensen Drive, and Lockwood Drive between I-610 and Cavalcade Street. Each of



Proposed Roadway Reallocations

Legend

- Study Area
- Proposed Reallocation**
- Yes
- Existing Bikeways**
- High Comfort Shared-Use Path
- Shared-Use Path
- Bike Lane
- Low Comfort Bike Lane
- Shared Lane/Signed Bike Route
- Water Features
- Edge of Pavement
- Railroads

Map of proposed roadway reallocations.

these streets has four through-traffic lanes and occasional turning lanes, and each – except for Lockwood Drive – measure fewer than 9,000 ADT - and as low as 2,000 - in 2009, 2012 or 2016.

The map illustrates the locations of these proposed reallocations. The table lists street segments, their type and status designated by the MTFP, the most recent ADT measurements, the recommended bikeway type from

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

- COH Department of Public Works and Engineering
- H-GAC
- Management District

(1) MTFP Policy Statement, Amended March 2015, p. 16. http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/mobility/docs_pdfs/2015_PolicyStatement.pdf



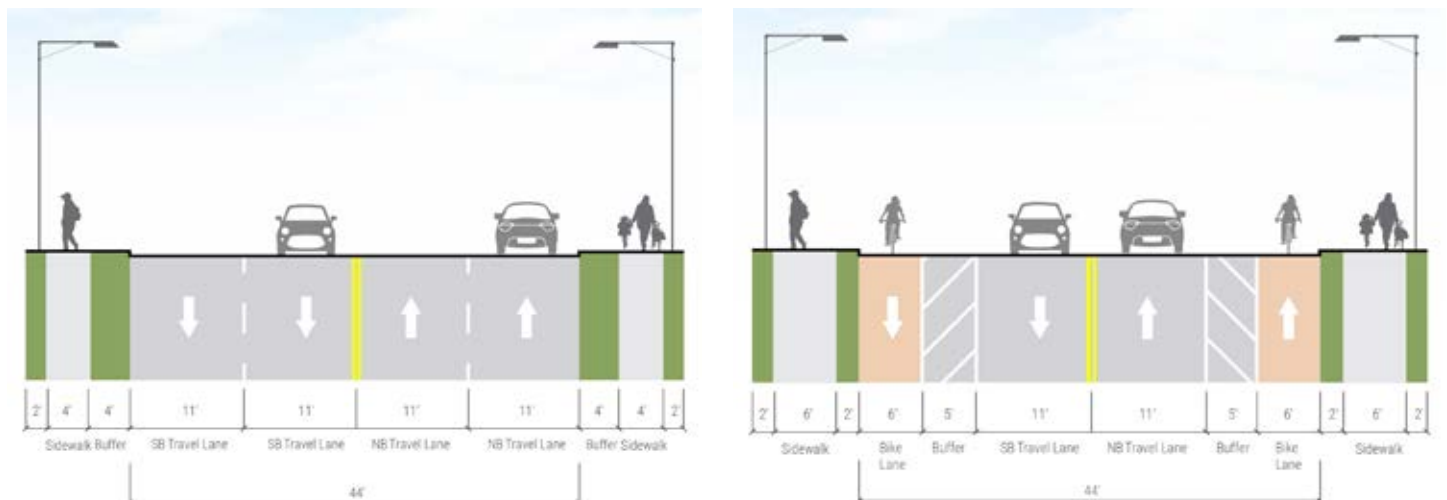
the Houston Bike Plan, and cost estimates for restriping the roadways and improving sidewalks. These costs are based on figures provided by the Houston Bike Plan and the Greater East End Management District (2015). The drawings on the following pages show section views of the proposed changes, by roadway segment. Each includes replacing a vehicle lane in each direction with a buffered bicycle lane consistent with designs specified in the Houston Bike Plan, and expanding sidewalks to a minimum of six feet in width.

Lockwood Drive deserves closer consideration than other roadways, given its changing number of lanes, higher levels of traffic – including truck traffic – and railroad

overpass, which is prone to higher speed traffic. Figure x illustrates these conditions. It shows a four-lane roadway with a fifth turning lane at signalized intersections from Minden Street to the southern end of the railroad overpass, and from Hershe Street to the I-10 East Freeway. Lockwood Drive is six lanes from the I-610 to Minden Street, and from the southern end of the railroad overpass to Hershe Street. The reallocation scenario shows the changing average daily traffic volumes on Lockwood Drive. Traffic counts are below 16,000 in the segment between I-610 and Cavalcade Street, yet in 2016 surpass this threshold farther south. Therefore, in the short-term, a roadway reallocation should occur between the I-610 and Cavalcade in conjunction with

Above: Existing Lockwood Drive traffic conditions and roadway capacity.

Below: Gregg Street, from New Orleans Street to I-10 East Freeway. Street section before reallocation (left) and after reallocation (right).



Proposed Street Segments for Reallocation and Cost.

STREET					EXISTING CONDITIONS					BIKE PLAN	
Name	From	To	Type	Status	Lanes	ADT	Year	Projected 20 Year ADT	Bikeway	Outlook	Type
Hirsch Rd	Cavalcade	North Loop	Major TF	TBW	4 / 5	4993	2012	6092	Low comfort	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Hirsch Rd	Collingsworth	Cavalcade	Major TF	SW	4 / 5	4543	2012	5543	Low comfort	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Altoona St	Liberty	Collingsworth	Major TF	TBW	4	4554	2012	5557	Low comfort	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Waco St*	Lyons	Liberty	Major TF	SW	4	8017	2012	9782	Low comfort	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Waco St	East Fwy	Lyons	Major TF	SW	4 / 5	7852	2012	9581	Low comfort	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Cavalcade St	Elysian	Eastex Fwy	Major TF	SW	4	17236	2016	21031	Low comfort	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Cavalcade St	Eastex Fwy.	Hirsch	Major TF	SW	4	7872	2012	9605	Low comfort	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Cavalcade St	Hirsch	Lockwood	Major TF	SW	4	6225	2012	7596	Low comfort	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Collingsworth	Elysian	Eastex Fwy	M. Collector	SW	5	7004	2016	8546	-	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Collingsworth	Eastex Fwy.	Hirsch	M. Collector	SW	4	8260	2016	10079	-	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Collingsworth	Hirsch	Lockwood	M. Collector	SW	5	4753	2016	5800	-	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Gregg St	New Orleans	East Fwy	-		4	2190	2012	2672	-	Short-Term	Dedicated On-Street
Jensen Dr	Cavalcade	North Loop	Major TF	SW	4 / 5	5696	2012	6950	-	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Jensen Dr	Collingsworth	Cavalcade	Major TF	TBW	3	4016	2012	4900	-	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Jensen Dr	Quitman	Collingsworth	Major TF	SW	3	4054	2012	4947	-	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Jensen Dr	Lyons	Quitman	Major TF	SW	3 / 4	5292	2012	6457	-	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Jensen Dr	East Fwy	Lyons	Major TF	SW	4	4085	2012	4984	-	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Quitman St	Jensen	Eastex Fwy	Major TF	SW	4	7973	2012	9729		Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Quitman St	Eastex Fwy	Liberty	Major TF	SW	5	6033	2012	7361		Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Liberty Rd	Quitman	Waco	Major TF	SW	2	6104	2012	7448		Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Liberty Rd	Waco	Lockwood	Major TF	SW	4	7343	2009	8960		Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Lockwood Dr	Cavalcade	North Loop	Principal		4 / 5	13595	2016	16588	-	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Lockwood Dr	Collingsworth	Cavalcade	Principal	SW	4	18503	2016	22577	-	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Lockwood Dr	Liberty	Collingsworth	Principal		4	15166	2016	18505	-	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Lockwood Dr**	Lyons	Liberty	Principal		4 / 5	37707	2016	46010	-	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street
Lockwood Dr	East Fwy	Lyons	Principal		4	18959	2016	23134	-	Long Term	Dedicated On-Street

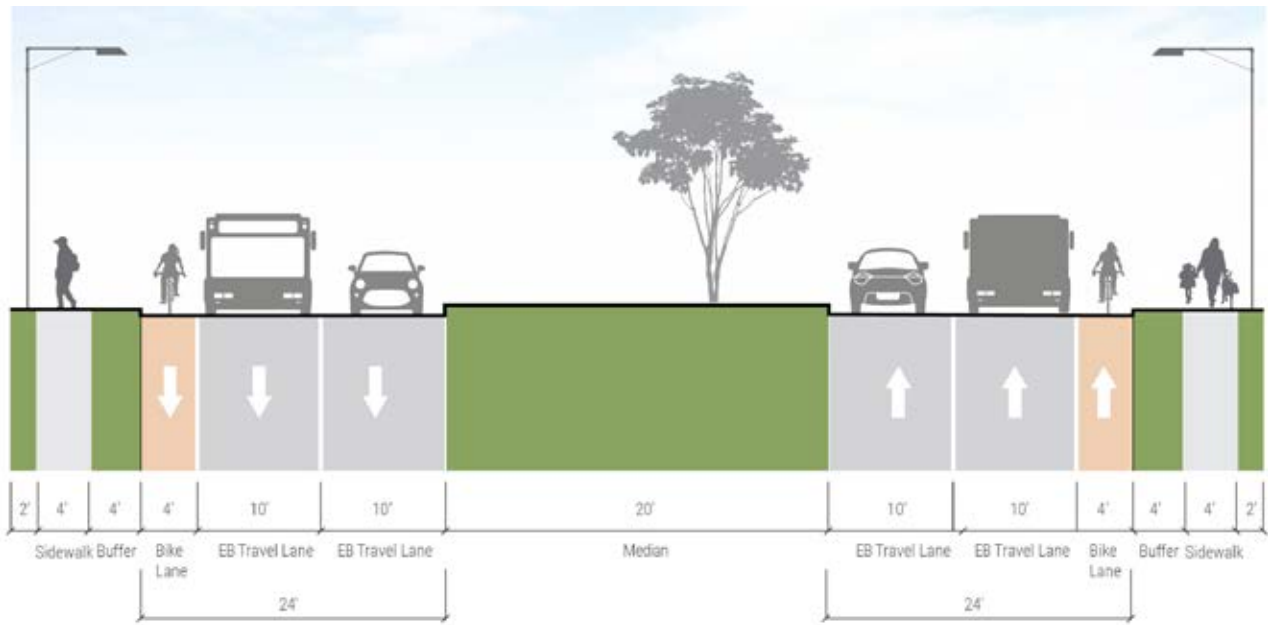
*The "missing" segment counts both sides of the Altoona Street overpass, between Liberty Road and Noble Street, which is limited access. The sidewalk paving cost estimate excludes the cost of retrofitting the overpass.

**Excludes the overpass, which features 4' sidewalks with no room for expansion without a reallocation of vehicular lanes, or retrofitting of the structure. The sidewalk paving cost estimate excludes the cost of retrofitting the overpass.

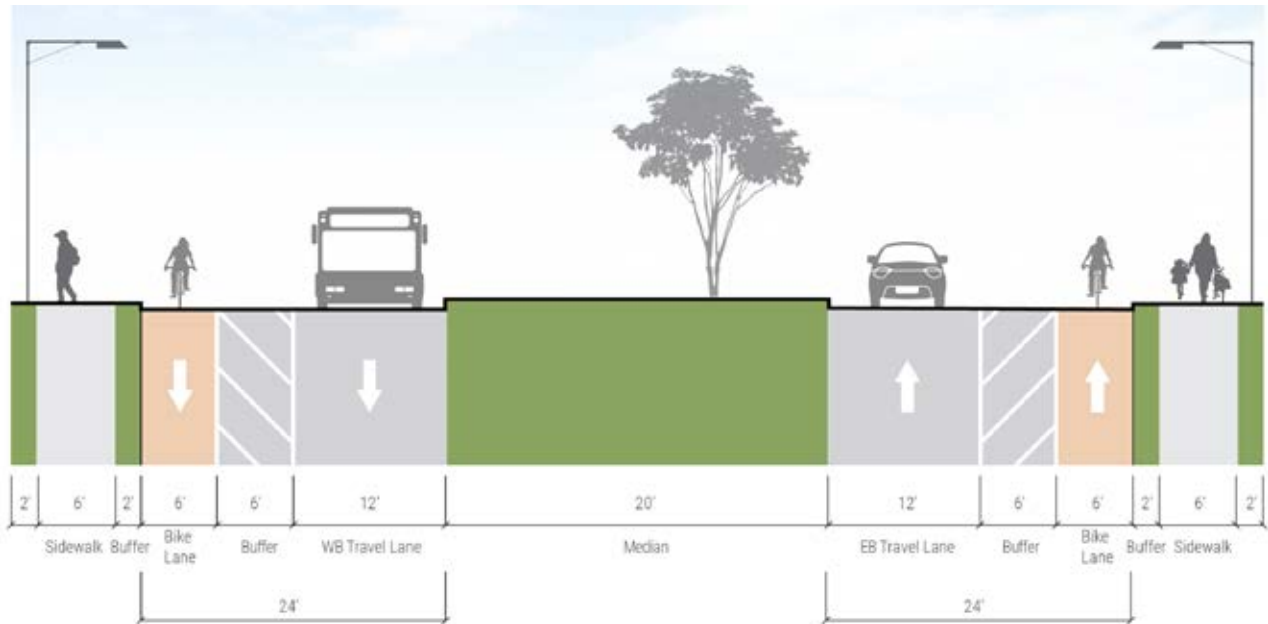
*** The segment from Waco to Solo is Programmed. The Segment from Solo to Lockwood is Long Term.

PROPOSED BIKEWAYS				SIDEWALK CONDITIONS (LF)				Sidewalk Paving Cost	Street Furniture Cost	Pedestrian Light Cost	Street Tree Cost
Proposed Lanes	Length (miles)	Low Cost	High Cost	Good	Poor	Missing	Total				
2	0.57	\$51,300	\$119,700	5600	0	0	5600	\$-	\$32,667	\$560,000	\$105,000
2	0.47	\$42,300	\$98,700	4800	0	0	4800	\$-	\$28,000	\$480,000	\$90,000
2	0.5	\$45,000	\$105,000	3000	1860	0	4860	\$74,400	\$28,350	\$486,000	\$91,125
2	0.71	\$63,900	\$149,100	340	2630	3920	6890	\$105,200	\$40,192	\$689,000	\$129,188
2	0.23	\$20,700	\$48,300	0	2600	0	2600	\$104,000	\$15,167	\$260,000	\$48,750
2	0.7	\$63,000	\$147,000	0	6960	0	6960	\$278,400	\$40,600	\$696,000	\$130,500
2	0.71	\$63,900	\$149,100	0	6520	0	6520	\$260,800	\$38,033	\$652,000	\$122,250
2	0.68	\$61,200	\$142,800	0	6560	0	6560	\$262,400	\$38,267	\$656,000	\$123,000
2	0.69	\$62,100	\$144,900	0	3350	3700	7050	\$245,000	\$41,125	\$705,000	\$132,188
2	0.72	\$64,800	\$151,200	240	6500	0	6740	\$260,000	\$39,317	\$674,000	\$126,375
2	0.7	\$63,000	\$147,000	0	6760	0	6760	\$270,400	\$39,433	\$676,000	\$126,750
2	0.53	\$47,700	\$111,300	440	3920	0	4360	\$156,800	-	-	\$81,750
2	0.54	\$48,600	\$113,400	0	4800	340	5140	\$202,200	\$29,983	\$514,000	\$96,375
2	0.57	\$51,300	\$119,700	0	5880	0	5880	\$235,200	\$34,300	\$588,000	\$110,250
2	0.71	\$63,900	\$149,100	3590	3590	0	7180	\$143,600	\$41,883	\$718,000	\$134,625
2	0.67	\$60,300	\$140,700	0	6660	0	6660	\$266,400	\$38,850	\$666,000	\$124,875
2	0.39	\$35,100	\$81,900	75	1790	670	2535	\$91,700	\$14,788	\$253,500	\$47,531
2	0.13	\$11,700	\$27,300		850		850	\$34,000	\$4,958	\$85,000	\$15,938
2	0.1	\$9,000	\$21,000	50	150	310	510	\$15,300	\$2975	\$51,000	\$9563
2	0.7	\$63,000	\$147,000	920	5645		6565	\$225,800	\$38,296	\$656,500	\$123,094
2	0.71	\$63,900	\$149,100		6070		6070	\$242,800	\$35,408	\$607,000	\$113,813
2	0.6	\$54,000	\$126,000	0	5910	0	5910	\$236,400	\$34,475	\$591,000	\$110,813
4		\$-	\$-	0	4740	0	4740	\$189,600	\$27,650	\$474,000	\$88,875
4		\$-	\$-	0	2680	0	2680	\$107,200	\$15,633	\$268,000	\$50,250
4		\$-	\$-	0	5600	0	5600	\$224,000	\$32,667	\$560,000	\$105,000
4		\$-	\$-	270	800	0	1070	\$32,000	\$6,242	\$107,000	\$20,063

Cavalcade Street, from Elysian Street to Lockwood Avenue - Before Reallocation.



Cavalcade Street, from Elysian Street to Lockwood Avenue - After Reallocation.



streetscape improvements. This segment is home to the Kashmere Multi-Service Center, Kashmere Gardens Elementary School, and McCrane-Kashmere Gardens Library. In the long-term, the City of Houston should consider adding a protected bike lane to the segments south of Cavalcade Street in concert with potential roadway widenings or repair/replacement of the railroad overpass. All proposed cross sections are conceptual and should be evaluated for local conditions. The presence of schools, such as above, may merit an additional drop off lane, for example.

To complete the roadway reallocations, several policy and

project resources should be utilized. First, the City of Houston Department of Public Works and Engineering should conduct updated traffic studies to justify reduction in capacity in the mentioned roadways. The Planning and Development Department will be responsible for updating the relevant street segments within the City's MTFP to reflect current conditions and needs. The City of Houston will then be responsible for dedicating funding for the design, engineering and construction of the recommended reallocations. The NNMD may accelerate this process by and engaging city policymakers and publicly supporting the recommended changes.

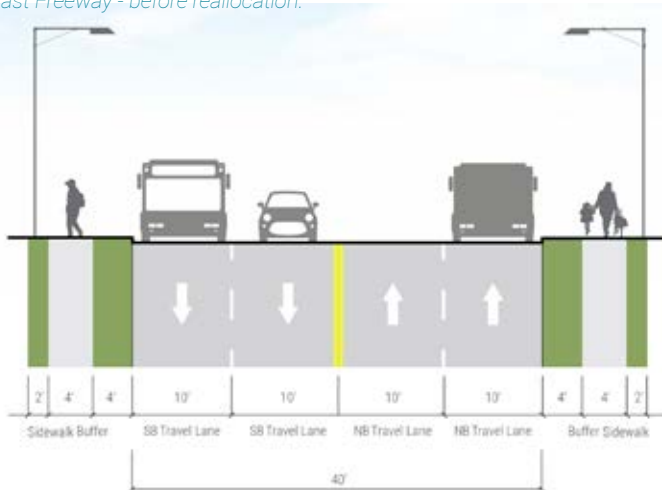


Hirsch / Broyles / Altoona / Waco Street, from I-610 North Loop to I-10 East Freeway, before reallocation.

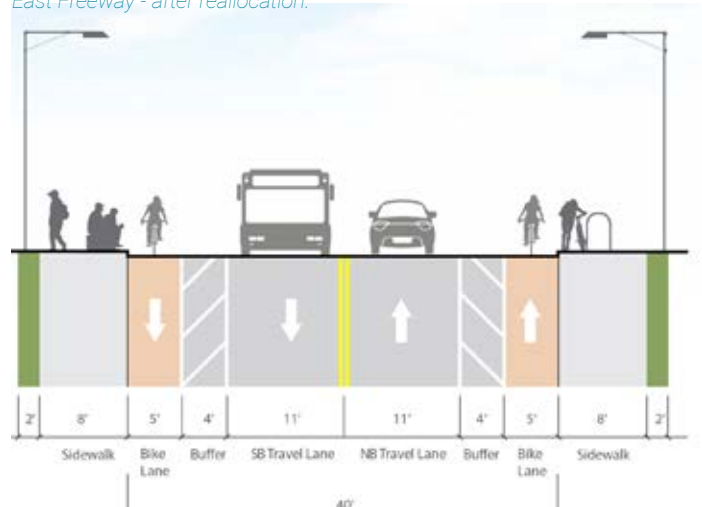


Hirsch / Broyles / Altoona / Waco Street, from I-610 North Loop to I-10 East Freeway, after reallocation.

Jensen Drive, from I-610 North Loop to I-10 East Freeway - before reallocation.



Jensen Drive, from I-610 North Loop to I-10 East Freeway - after reallocation.



COST ESTIMATE ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

The tables below show a planning-level opinion of probable cost for recommended complete streets improvements, organized by street segments as defined by the MTFP. The assumptions used for standards and costs are shown below. The scope of work required was calculated based on a combination of existing conditions: streets rated “good” do not need sidewalk improvements; streets rated ‘poor’ require sidewalk demolition and reconstruction; and streets rated ‘missing’ require sidewalk construction but not demolition.

Street trees, furniture and pedestrian lighting are recommended for all thoroughfares designated by the MTFP, and only street trees are proposed for non-thoroughfares (Gregg Street).

3.5 COORDINATE WITH PROJECT HUNTING AND BAYOU GREENWAYS 2020 AND FACILITATE COMMUNICATION WITH THE COMMUNITY. SPECIFIC EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACED ON PERMANENT

STANDARDS		
	Unit	Amount
Street Tree Spacing	Ft	40
Ped Light Spacing	Ft	75
Sidewalk Width	Ft	6
Amenity Spacing	Ft	1200

COSTS			
Item	Unit	Unit Cost	Source
Sidewalks			
Demolition	LF	\$10	GEEMD 2015
Installation	LF	\$30	GEEMD 2016
Lighting (spacing)	Each	\$7,500	GEEMD 2016
Trees (spacing)	Each	\$750	GEEMD 2016
Street Furniture			
Seating	Each	\$5,000	LAN 2015
Bike Racks	Each	\$1,000	2009 Reference
Waste Receptacles	Each	\$1,000	2009 Reference

3.4 IMPROVE THE COMMUNITY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RAILROAD

Industrial and freight uses: One of the largest rail yards in Houston sits squarely in the middle of Kashmere Gardens. This, plus the many railroads that serve it, interrupt the street network, making it harder for residents and visitors to move about the neighborhood. These railyards and railroads are unlikely to be deactivated. But they can provide employment opportunities for residents, and could attract light industrial and manufacturing jobs. High vehicular traffic at highway on-ramps and off-ramps make vacant land at these locations attractive for commercial development. Industrial businesses seeking train and highway access could be recruited to open at the railyard and to hire local residents. In addition to job opportunities, relations between the community and the railroad can be improved by taking advantage of Union Pacific programs.

The railroad's presence does produce significant challenges to improving this relationship. In addition to physical barriers and the fact that the Englewood Rail Terminal is unlikely to cease operations in the near future, the lines geographically divide the neighborhood, creates logistical and transportation barriers, and present safety issues.

Recommendations to improve the community's relationship with the railroad include:

- Taking advantage of Union Pacific's community programs, such as the UP CARES Safety Program, the UP DREAM Education Program and the UP Girls on Board STEM (Science, technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Workshops.
- Working with HISD to develop relationship with UP's secondary school programs.
- Requesting a railroad safety presentation at community meetings, church gatherings, the schools.
- Outreach promoting Union Pacific's Safety Response Management Communication Center, which is available 24/7.

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

UP
HISD
Local Universities

UNION PACIFIC COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

UP has many community programs including safety programs, education and mentoring, as well as job fairs. There are also grant and scholarship opportunities. These programs and opportunities are typically created from a grass-roots community level.

UNION PACIFIC COMMUNITY-BASED GRANT PROGRAM

The Foundation awards grants through an annual application process through which nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations and municipalities located in Union Pacific communities may apply. Areas of interest are community, civic and health and human services project.

AND TEMPORARY BRIDGE CLOSURES

Project Hunting is a federal project, costs supported by Harris County Flood Control District are fully reimbursable upon project completion, if and when those funds become available. Ten to fifteen percent of the total project is completed,

which included acquiring 98 parcels adjacent to Hunting Bayou. Those lots were necessary to project success as much of the flood control improvements involve widening and deepening of Hunting Bayou to maximize conveyance of water. Harris County Flood Control estimates the project will be completed within four to six years. Work began in 2007 and included "benching excavation." This type of work involves expanding the channel width only above the water line. In order for the project to be completed, a detention basin northeast of the project area along Homestead Road must be finished and railroad bridges downstream of Kashmere Gardens must be replaced to allow for stream widening, at which point improvements can be completed in the Kashmere Gardens neighborhood section of Hunting Bayou. If permits are approved through the city, the bridge at Leffingwell Street will be removed without replacement as part of the project.

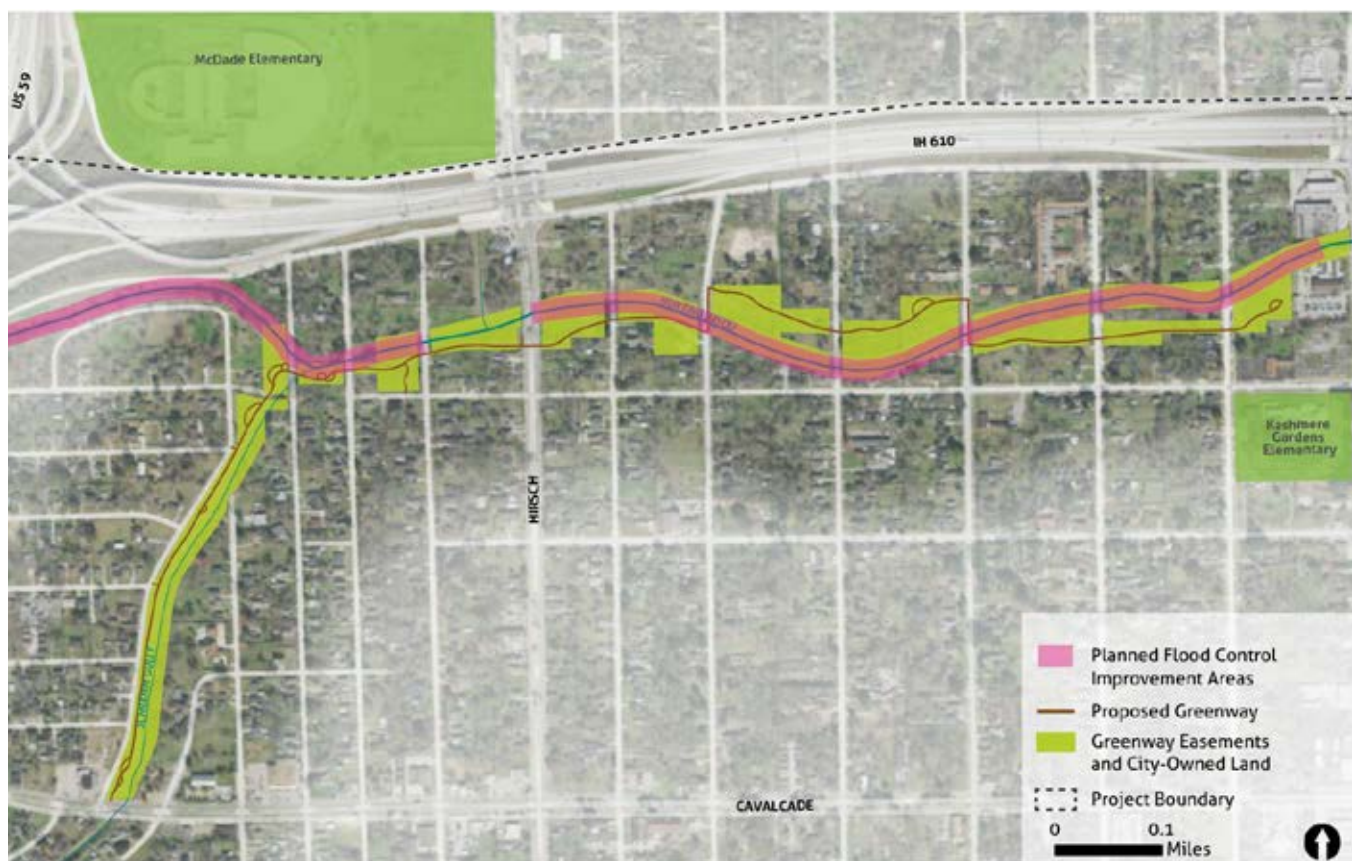
The Houston Parks Board has engaged in a city-wide initiative called Bayou Greenways 2020 which will create a network of connected parks and trails along Houston's major waterways.

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

Harris County Flood Control District
Houston Parks Board
Multi-Service Center Management District



Planned flood control improvements.

Proposed recreation improvements by Greenways 2020.



Bayou Greenways 2020 will transform more than 3,000 acres of greenspace and connect 150 miles of off-street hike and bike trails along the bayous. When the project is complete, 6 out of 10 Houstonians will live within a mile and half of a Bayou Greenway. Harris County Flood Control District has asked The Houston Parks Board to hold construction of the Hunting Bayou Greenway until after the channel improvements along Hunting in Kashmere Gardens are completed. The Hunting Bayou Greenway Project spans a reach of the Bayou and its tributary Schramm Gully from Mickey Leland Park through Hutcheson Park. The Parks Board emphasizes the importance of connection between the greenway and the surrounding community and articulated that sentiment in the trail's design - including many access points to the greenway as well as numerous parklets in key locations. Designs were presented by the Parks Board to the community in the second of two public meetings about the project.

Though some engagement has been

conducted around the planning and design of the Hunting Bayou Greenway, it is recommended that the Management District engage in ongoing and open communication with both Harris County Flood Control District and Houston Parks Board regarding the community implications for the projects such as the date, duration, and location of road or bridge closures related to Project Hunting or the Hunting Bayou Greenway, and regarding project completion dates for Project Hunting or the Hunting Bayou Greenway. Additionally, the management district should be aware of impending changes to the FEMA floodplain map that will eventually be the result of Project Hunting's improvements. Floodplain reductions will reduce the number of residents susceptible to flood risk and, upon approval through FEMA, will reduce the cost of or eliminate a homeowner's need for flood insurance.

GOAL 4: ALIGN CITYWIDE PLANS WITH THE COMMUNITY'S GOALS

There are several city-wide planning efforts in progress that have the potential to improve life in Kashmere Gardens. Efforts must be made to ensure these planning efforts align with the community's long-term goals, as well as provide short-term solutions to pressing transportation issues.

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

METRO

Management District

4.1 PILOT METRO COMMUNITY CONNECTOR

Due to the lack of job, retail and services within the neighborhood, Kashmere Gardens residents must commute outside the neighborhood to access them. However, across Houston, neighborhoods that have lost population and jobs, such as Kashmere Gardens, have seen reduced levels of fixed-route bus service. This means residents without personal vehicles face longer, less frequent trips to destinations outside the neighborhood.

In response to this inconvenience, METRO has introduced Community Connector to select neighborhoods. Community Connector is a "demand-response" service that operates within four-to-five square mile zones within Metro's overall service area. Customers catch a ride in two ways: 1) Call the Community Connector hot-line when you need one, 2) Schedule a recurring one to occur the same time and day of the week. Passengers may also simply board at either of two "hubs" – usually Metro Transit Centers or major shopping centers – at scheduled intervals.

A Kashmere Gardens Community Connector would:

1. Operate two vehicles within the boundaries of the Study Area between two hubs – likely the Kashmere and Fifth Ward/Denver Harbor Transit Centers.
2. Operate for 14 hours per day –e.g. 5:30am-7:30pm - seven days a week
3. Be branded, with community input, to maximize awareness of the service

According to Metro, a one-year pilot using two buses, including marketing, would cost about \$500,000. Potential funding sources could come from a Federal Transit Administration program. For instance, the "Ladders of Opportunity" Initiative awarded funds to such programs throughout the country. While this source has been exhausted, future federal allocations could make such funds available again in the future. A one-vehicle pilot would cost \$250,000 - \$300,000, but would offer less frequent service.

The Management District, together with H-GAG and Metro, should explore local, state and federal funding sources to fund a one-year pilot of a Kashmere Gardens Community Connector. Should the service's ridership meet or exceed goals, permanent funding sources should be considered.

HOW DO I CATCH THE BUS?

Call when you need a ride



Schedule for the same time of the day or week



WHERE CAN IT TAKE ME?

Any destination within the service area



One of two transit centers



To transfer to the express bus to downtown



4.2 ADDRESS AREAS OF HIGH PARK NEED ACCORDING TO THE HOUSTON PARKS PLAN

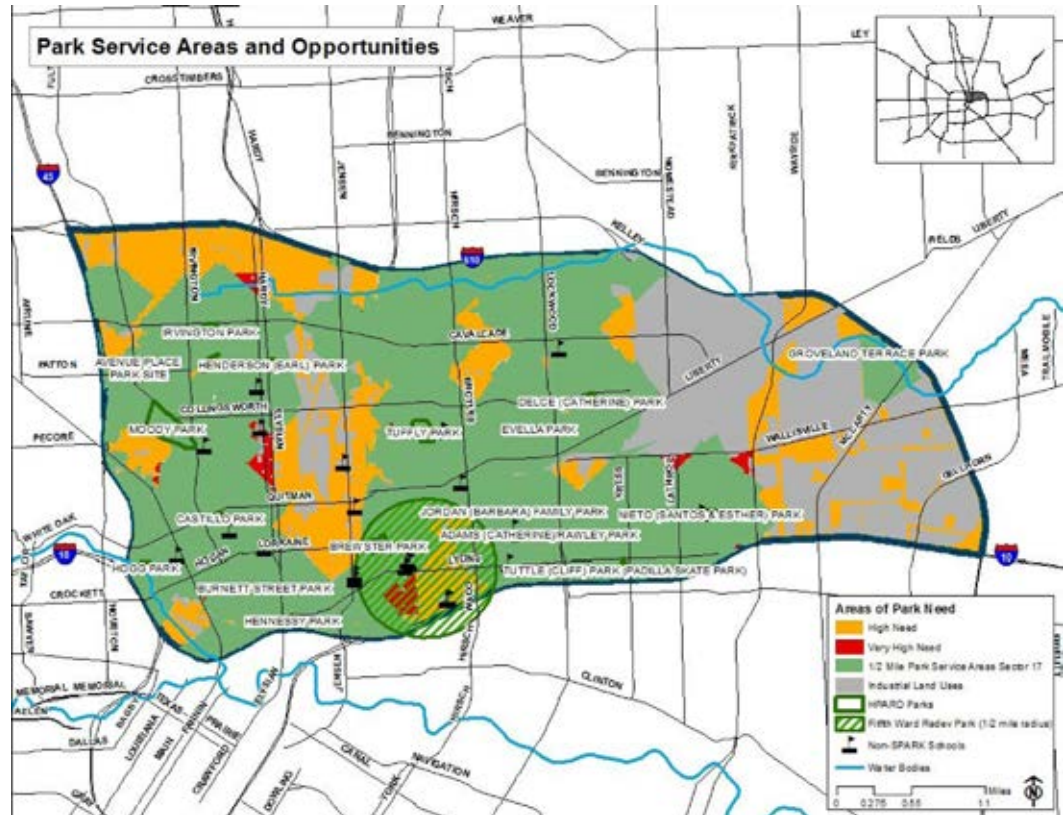
TYPE:



The graphics below show target areas and amenities needed to ensure Sector 17 of the Houston Parks System is equitably served. These findings are consistent with the recommendations in this study, specifically in 7.3 where they can be found in detail.

PARTNERS:

- COH Parks and Recreation
- Houston Parks Board
- Multi-Service Center Management District



AMENITY	PLAYGROUNDS	PICNIC SHELTERS	TRAILS (MILES)	OUTDOOR BASKETBALL COURTS	TENNIS	VOLLEYBALL	DOG PARKS	SKATE PARKS	COMMUNITY CENTERS	SWIMMING POOLS	OUTDOOR SPRAYGROUNDS	BASEBALL (LIT and UNIT)	SOFTBALL (LIT and UNIT)	SOCCER (LIT and UNIT)
2015 Goal	27	10	11	16	6	2	1	1	4	2	2	7	2	6
2015 Existing	27	10	11*	16	3	0	0	1	4	2	2	7	1	4
2015 Needed	-	-	-	-	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
2040 Needed	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

*This number includes 4.55 miles of trails currently planned along Hunting Bayou under the Bayou Greenways Initiative (BG2020).

	1	2	3	4
	COST OF NEW SYSTEM AMENITIES	COST OF NEW PARK LAND	COST OF HPARD EXISTING AMENITY RENOVATION	ANNUAL COST OF OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE
2015	\$7,000,000	55 Acres- \$10,000,000	\$19,000,000	\$3,600,000
2040	\$1,000,000	19 Acres- \$3,000,000	\$40,000,000	\$500,000
TOTAL 2040	\$8,000,000	74 Acres- \$13,000,000	\$59,000,000	\$4,100,000

EXCERPTS FROM THE PARKS MASTER PLAN

Top - Park Needs based on 0.5 mile access radius; middle - Amenity needs; bottom - Amenity need cost estimates

4.3 BUILD BIKEWAYS PROPOSED IN THE HOUSTON BIKE PLAN

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

COH Department of Public Works & Engineering

H-GAC

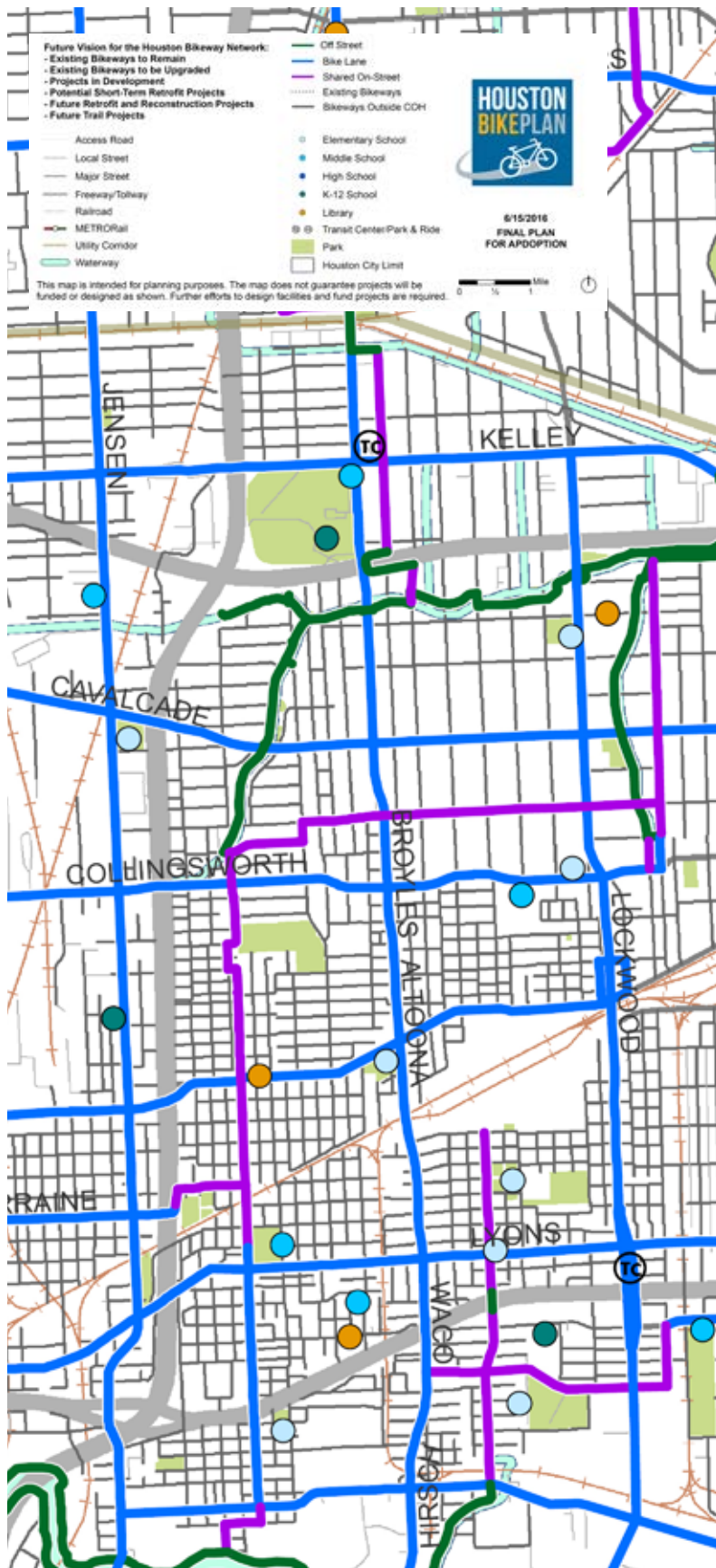
Management District

The City of Houston developed the Houston Bike Plan through a 12-month planning effort to update the City's Comprehensive Bikeway Plan originally adopted in 1993. The City of Houston Planning & Development Department led the update of the plan in coordination with the Public Works & Engineering Department and Houston Parks and Recreation Department. A key plan goal is to increase the number of "high-comfort" lanes and connect them across the city, so riders of all abilities may feel safe traversing neighborhoods, with a goal of over 1,600 miles of bikeways. When repaving or striping roadways, the City of Houston should consider opportunities to implement the Houston Bike Plans for on-street and off-street bikeways in Kashmere Gardens. See Recommendation 3.3 for specific recommendations for thoroughfares within the Study Area.



(Images: Asakura Robinson from the Houston Bike Plan)

LONG TERM VISION MAP FROM THE HOUSTON BIKE PLAN



The City of Houston Public Works and Engineering Department does not have dedicated funding for re-striping, which will be the primary tool for implementation of the recommendations of the Houston Bike Plan and the Kashmere Gardens Livable Center. As such, outside funding, such as management district funding, could accelerate the implementation of the Houston Bike Plan recommendations.

GOAL 5: OPTIMIZE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS AND AWARENESS

Kashmere Gardens, like much of eastern Houston, has been heavily linked with industry and transportation centered around the Port of Houston, Buffalo Bayou, and one of the largest rail terminals in the City. Efforts must be made to mitigate issues caused by this proximity and build on existing assets.

5.1 ADDRESS SOIL CONTAMINATION NEAR LIBERTY ROAD

There are numerous known environmental issues in Kashmere Gardens that have the potential to create health problems and complicate investment and development. These issues within the district include: three known brownfield sites (that have been given to the City by LARA); Hunting Bayou's water quality is rated by EPA as 'Impaired'; three nearby Superfund sites; nonpoint sources of pollution from trash and dumping; and air quality does not meet the national ambient air quality standards for ground level ozone.

One of the brownfield sites on Liberty Road is under supervision by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Recommendations for the management district include:

- Monitor the City of Houston, TCEQ, and EPA progress on known brownfield sites within the district and the water quality status of Hunting Bayou.
- Develop a citizen's advisory board to work in conjunction with EPA to monitor sites.
- Work with regional air quality entities and non-profit groups to learn how to be advised of high ozone days that may cause health emergencies in the elderly, young, and people with asthma.
- Work with the city to eliminate and quickly address dumping sites.
- Educate the citizens on proper disposal of household chemicals and waste.

Additionally, the City of Houston Brownfields Redevelopment Program (BRP) should continue to identify additional brownfields sites in the study area and conduct environmental assessments as needed and as funding allows. This will allow for continued identification of properties potentially impacted by contaminants that may pose health and safety risks to the community. It will also allow for the BRP to develop cleanup plans to address contamination, as well as developing potential reuse and redevelopment strategies that align with the goals of the community.



LEGEND

- Brownfields
- Superfund Sites
- ▭ Study Area
- Bayous
- ▭ Parks
- Railroads
- Major Roads
- Roads

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

COH
Harris County
TCEQ
EPA
Management District

5.2 COORDINATE TREE PLANTING EFFORTS TO PROVIDE HIGHWAY BUFFER AREAS

Highways surrounding Kashmere Gardens provide many opportunities for economic growth but their proximity to residential areas endangers nearby residents if pollution buffers are not implemented. A 2014 study found that trees and forests in the US removed 17.4 million tons of air pollution in 2010, with human health effects valued at \$6.8 billion (1). While rural forests account for much of the mass of removed air pollution, urban areas account for 68% of the monetary health benefit. Though results vary by region and tree species, 65 to 600 foot forested highway buffer can reduce particulate pollution by 40-75%. Areas in Kashmere Gardens within 500 to 1000 feet of highways and within 500 feet of railroads are susceptible to higher concentrations of air pollutants that can have negative public health implications and should be prioritized for transformation into pollution buffers. Vacant land within these buffers could provide opportunities to reforest, promoting air and noise pollution mitigation, local temperature reduction through evapotranspiration and shading, increased ecosystem service benefit from carbon sequestration and habitat creation, and increased environmental equity through mitigating environmental hazards for some of the community's more vulnerable and

disproportionately affected families. The map to the right illustrates parcel prioritization for reforestation. Parcels were prioritized based on ownership - vacant parcels owned by the city of Houston prioritized over other vacant lands; proximity to highways - parcels within 500 feet are prioritized over parcels within 1000 feet; parcel size and connectivity - parcels with more acreage or multiple connected adjacent parcels were prioritized over smaller isolated parcels; and, adjacency to residentially zoned areas - parcels directly adjacent to residential areas were prioritized over parcels adjacent to other land uses such as commercial.

Partnerships between the management district and local non-profits are essential to implementing this recommendation. Trees for Houston, founded in 1983, has planted half a million trees and continues to grow, plant, and maintain thousands of trees across the greater Houston region. They are willing to plant trees at no cost to the management district; and for \$150 per tree, Trees for Houston will water trees for two years and guarantee each tree's success over that period. Trees for Houston is able to provide site-specific expertise regarding planting plans and species selection.

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

Trees for Houston
Management District

RESOURCES:

City of Houston/
LARA lots

Funding to pay for
two years of tree
watering (\$150/tree
total)

City approval for tree
planting

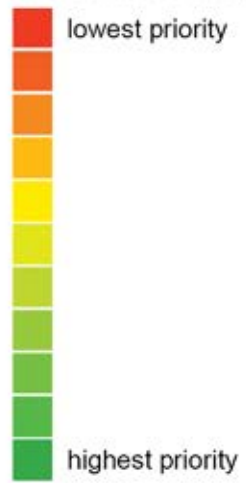
(1) Nowak, David, Satoshi Hirabayashi, Allison Bodine, and Eric Greenfield. (Tree and forest effects on air quality and human health in the United States. *Environmental Pollution*. 193 (2014) 119e129.

Priority vacant parcels for reforestation.



-  Study Area
-  Bayous
-  Water Features
-  Creeks & Streams
-  Railroads
-  Major Roads

Vacant Parcel Reforestation Priority



5.3 COLLABORATE WITH TREES FOR HOUSTON TO INCREASE COMMUNITY CAPACITY FOR TREE CARE

Recommendation 5.3 supports recommendation 5.2 by promoting community outreach and awareness of tree planting programs, tree maintenance, and benefits trees provide to the community. During public meetings, Kashmere Gardens residents expressed concern about maintenance of existing trees on private property in situations where maintenance by homeowners was no longer possible because of either tree size or the owner's physical ability to carry out maintenance. Without both monetary support and education on ongoing maintenance, existing trees can deteriorate in health. Without regular maintenance from an early age, trees are likely to have shorter lives, become liabilities to buildings and people - especially during extreme weather, and will provide fewer ecosystem service benefits to the community over the tree's lifetime. Recommendation 5.3 is two-fold in this regard:

- The management district should establish a need-based fund to aid homeowners in paying for contractors to maintain healthy trees they are unable to maintain on their own.
- The management district should partner with Trees for Houston to provide tree planting and maintenance training. Ongoing small-scale maintenance can reduce overall maintenance and cost-burden over the life of a tree. Trees for Houston is also willing to provide free trees for residents to plant on private property if residents are able to commit to regular maintenance.

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

Trees for Houston
Management District

RESOURCES:

Programming with the Multi-service Center

Management District, and Trees for Houston to complete outreach to advertise tree maintenance training sessions (Trees for Houston will provide training free of charge)



Trees for Houston is a resource that provides maintenance and training. (Image: acttrees.com)

5.4 FACILITATE REMOVAL OF UNNECESSARY IMPERVIOUS COVER

Improvements along Hunting Bayou are set to be completed over the next four to six years and will reduce flood risk for Kashmere Gardens. Removal of impervious cover throughout Kashmere Gardens will complement this project by further reducing flood risk and will promote improved regional hydrologic function. Abandoned foundations on empty lots, underutilized parking lots, overgrown sidewalks, paved trails, and other types of impervious cover can either be completely removed or can be converted to pervious pavement. Policy to support this

recommendation is needed to promote removal of impervious cover from public lands and right-of-ways and could be established by the management district. Further study of unnecessary impervious cover would inform priority removal. Outreach to both educate and support removal of impervious cover on private land is needed to encourage land owners to engage in removal efforts or for the management district to gain approval from private property owners to engage in removal efforts.

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

COH Public Works and Engineering Department

Harris County Flood Control District

Management District

RESOURCES:

Approval of property owners (on vacant land) or City (on city-owned vacant land or right-of-ways) Funding for removal.



Removal of unnecessary impervious cover will help ease flooding issues in the area.

5.5 PROMOTE IMPROVED WATER QUALITY AND HYDROLOGY THROUGH GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS ON VACANT LAND

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

COH Public Works and Engineering Department

Harris County Flood Control District

H-GAC

Management District

RESOURCES:

Policy to promote or incentivize green infrastructure improvements over traditional gray infrastructure

Funding to provide professional expertise to prioritize potential green infrastructure sites, design green infrastructure projects, and implement designed projects

Community toolkit providing steps for implementing green infrastructure improvements on vacant land using H-GAC's LID Guidebook.

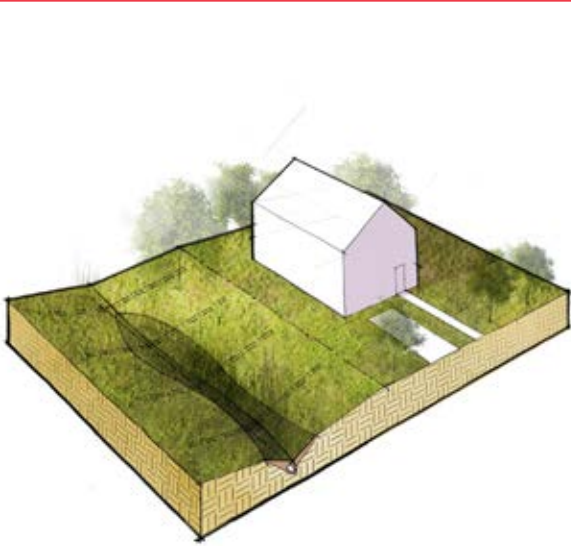
To further complement Hunting Bayou flood control improvements and any removal of impervious cover, green infrastructure should be promoted or incentivized as a standard for new and redeveloped land. Green infrastructure practices that promote hydrological health can include treatments such as bioswales, constructed wetlands, and permeable pavement, among others. These treatments can take the place of traditional right-of-way landscapes and serve both aesthetic and practical functions. Vacant land could also be utilized to serve as retention areas for surrounding parcels. Additionally, a combination of these treatments can replace or minimize large stormwater detention and retention requirements placed on new and redeveloped properties of a certain size if policy allows. The management district should work with the City of Houston to enact policy to promote or incentivize these practices on public lands and when developers apply for permitting on private land. Areas with localized flooding and areas closest to waterways should be prioritized to receive green infrastructure treatment first. Green infrastructure can have immediate success in mitigating localized flooding. Green infrastructure in close proximity to Hunting Bayou will reduce the amount of water Hunting Bayou will need to convey and will increase water quality in surrounding waterways.

The management district should also engage the community around green infrastructure projects by conducting outreach and education. An incentive-based program to promote green infrastructure improvements on private property has been effective elsewhere and is recommended for the Kashmere Gardens neighborhood. Austin Water, the City of Austin water utility, offers numerous programs to incentivize land owners to both minimize water use and retain stormwater on their property. Some of these programs in Austin include:

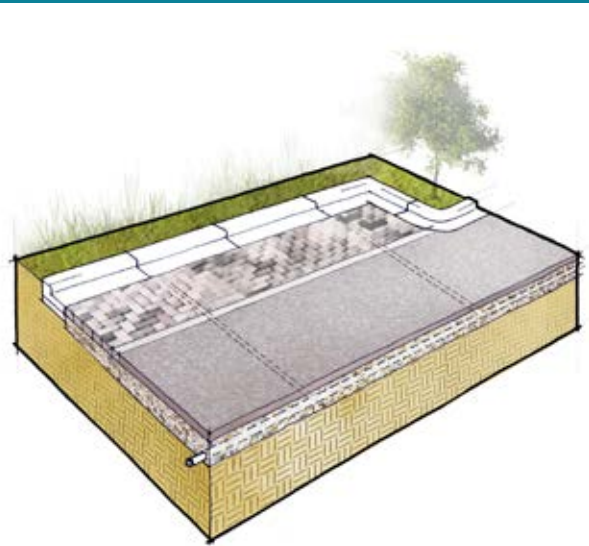
- **WaterWise Rainscape Rebate:** Homeowners and schools may receive up to \$500 (\$0.30/sq. foot -- 100 sq. foot min.) for installing landscape features such as berms, terraces, swales, rain gardens, porous pavement, and infiltration trenches that direct and retain rainwater on the property.
- **WaterWise Landscape Rebate:** Homeowners may receive up to \$1,750 per property (lifetime limit; \$35 for every 100 square feet -- 500 sq. ft minimum) for converting turf grass to native landscapes that require less watering.
- **Rainwater Harvesting Rebate:** Property owners may receive up to \$5,000 per site (lifetime limit) toward materials and labor needed to install a rainwater harvesting system.

(2) <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/water-conservation-rebates>

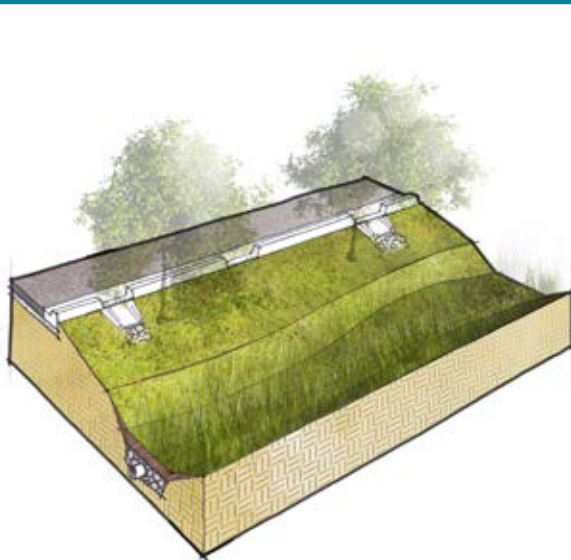
VACANT LOT



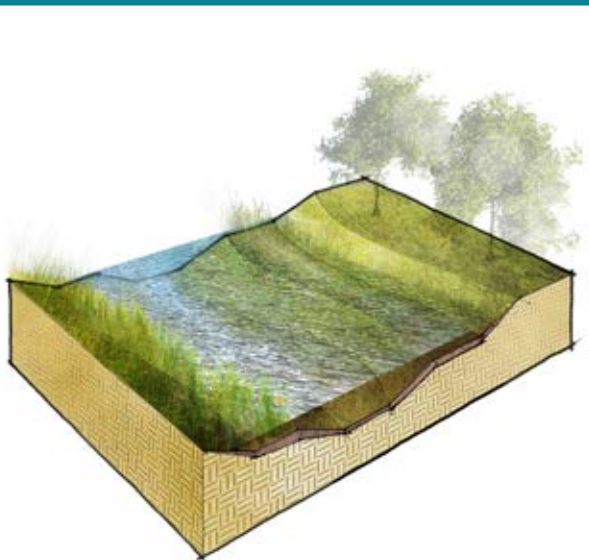
PERMEABLE PAVERS



BIOSWALE



CONSTRUCTED WETLAND



GOAL 6: SUPPORT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Kashmere Gardens had historically been a thriving community with a strong commercial and cultural center. Today, however, economic development is a significant challenge in the study area, despite Houston's strong overall economy. Workforce development and entrepreneurial support programs can help support the local economy.

6.1 EXPAND JOB RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Kashmere Gardens residents could benefit from the expansion of jobs recruitment programs, increased job training and programs that take advantage of close proximity to industrial commercial activity. Programs to take advantage of include:

Scholarships from the Black Employee Network of Union Pacific

This scholarship is awarded to assist African American students in defraying the cost of higher education. Recipients are chosen on the basis of scholastic ability and leadership. Personal or family financial situations can be a factor in consideration of eligibility and in awarding the scholarship. All decisions are within the discretion of the Black Employee Network Scholarship Committee and are final.

Union Pacific Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

Union Pacific has programs in select areas of the country and are continually evolving and refining their strategy to attract and retain the best millennial STEM talent. These are programs such as:

- Code Crush, an annual immersion experience for middle and high school girls at the University of Nebraska at Omaha's College of Information Science and Technology. The program is designed to introduce girls to information technology in a secure, friendly and engaging environment.
- Girls on Board, an annual workshop that teaches middle school girls about non-traditional careers and celebrates women in STEM professions.
- A Union Pacific Information Technologies Department organized year-round summer high school internship pilot program, and college recruiting teams targeted Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) talent at 18 core universities.
- A Union Pacific sponsored K-12 student experiences that promote an interest in STEM careers.

Kashmere Garden Specific Programs

In addition to existing programs, the Management District should partner with local organizations to develop neighborhood-specific programs. With the District serving as coordinator with HISD, local elected officials, and church leaders, they should engage Union Pacific to develop programs such as:

- Recruiting STEM Graduates
- Supplier Diversity Program (helps create opportunities for hundreds of women- and minority-owned businesses)
- Internship Program
- Commitment as a Military Veteran Friendly Employer

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

Kashmere High

ProUnitas

Houston Area Urban League

Local corporations and railroads

Texas Southern University's Maritime Program w/ Port of Houston Authority

6.2. INVEST IN EXISTING BUSINESSES THROUGH STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS AND FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS, WITH A FOCUS ON THE CAN DO HOUSTON PILOT HEALTHY CORNER STORE SITE WHEN IT IS ESTABLISHED.

Existing businesses in Kashmere Gardens are concentrated along the Lockwood corridor, near highway exits such as the one on TX-59 at Collingsworth, and at major intersections such as Hirsch and Cavalcade. In concert with the Overall Development Strategy for Kashmere Gardens, the Management District should focus on streetscape improvements to enhance pedestrian facilities, streetscaping, lighting, and branding elements on these key corridors and intersections. Attracting grant funding for a facade improvement program that could help local businesses update their exterior facades could be a strong additional asset to help existing entrepreneurs build their customer base.

One upcoming initiative that could use particular support from the Management District is the expansion of Can Do Houston's Healthy Corner Store Initiative to the Kashmere Gardens area. This program helps local convenience stores convert some of their offerings to healthier fresh food options so that residents in areas that don't have traditional grocery stores can have regular access to fruits, vegetables, and other fresh products. Can Do focuses on establishing these stores in areas near schools to prioritize the health of children and families. While this program does not replace the need to work on attracting a traditional grocery store to the area, it provides additional health resources to the community. Supporting any new Healthy Corner Store locations with public realm and facade investments should be a priority.



Streetscape improvements on North Main Street, Houston.

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

Management District

6.3. SUPPORT AND CONNECT RESIDENTS TO THE LYONS AVENUE RENAISSANCE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, AND LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO EXTEND ACTIVITIES TO THE NORTHERN PART OF THE STUDY AREA.

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

Fifth Ward CRC

Houston Area Urban League

Kashmere Multi-Service Center

The Fifth Ward CRC has established a set of business development activities and opportunities for entrepreneurs and local businesses. While the activities center around Lyons Avenue, business owners and entrepreneurs from the surrounding area are welcome to attend. Some of the available training programs and activities include:

- Shops at the DeLuxe, a monthly pop-up retail event at the DeLuxe Theater that brings a number of local entrepreneurs together on the same weekend to sell their products. Fifth Ward CRC provides publicity and networking to help attract customers.
- Monthly business networking events that bring local business owners and managers together to share ideas, resources, and opportunities.
- Monthly business workshops that provide training on critical business skills like marketing, financial management, and more.

The Management District should ensure that Kashmere Gardens residents are aware of these programs, and should also look for areas where complementary or similar programs could occur in the northern portion of the study area. For example, a program that focuses on teaching entrepreneurship skills to youth with the help of Kashmere High School and ProUnitas could provide a good addition to the Lyons Avenue activities without being duplicative.



Shops at the DeLuxe event, Fifth Ward, Houston. (Image: Fifth Ward CRC)



Students and employers at a "Junior Achievement" career fair in Houston. (Image: PricewaterhouseCoopers)

GOAL 7: PROMOTE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Due to a variety of factors, Kashmere Gardens residents have higher than average negative health issues. Reducing this disparity by mitigating environmental health impacts and increasing access to necessary services is key to supporting the community.

7.1 ENSURE PRIMARY, DENTAL, MENTAL, AND WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE

After discussing major barriers to community healthcare resources with stakeholders, it was clear that many resources exist in regard to healthcare though those resources may not be known to the community. The reason for this seems to be two-fold:

1. Healthcare providers and community partners do not have enough funding to engage in ongoing or even periodic community outreach to inform community members of the many programs and resources available to them
2. The low literacy rate, less than 37%, in Kashmere Gardens is a barrier to quality and regular healthcare, especially when literacy impacts outreach efforts. Recommendations regarding healthcare parallel these concerns.



Outreach is needed to promote healthy activities taking place at the Multi-Service Center. (Image: neighborhood-centers.org)

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

Multi-Service Center
COH Health
Department
Management District

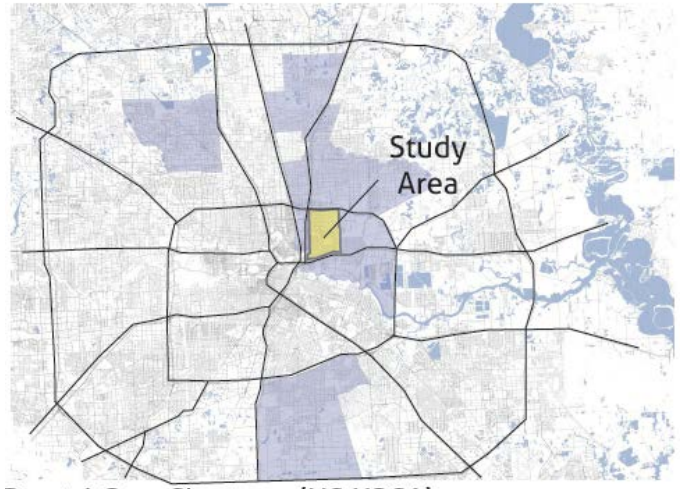
RESOURCES:

Funding and non-profit partnerships to support programs that provide literacy training through the multi-service center

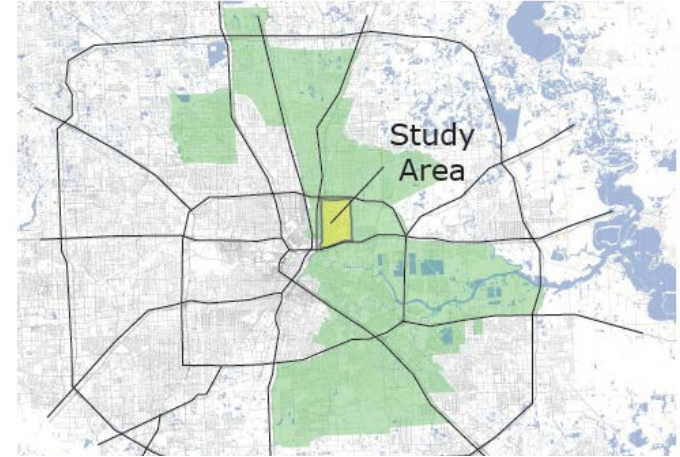
Funding to support community outreach to dispel any negative stigma associated with proactively seeking health care.

First, the management district should work with the multi-service center (MSC) to help fund and support regular community outreach and second, the management district and MSC should formalize a partnership with a reputable non-profit in order to assist in enacting a community literacy program at the center. There are numerous organizations in the Houston area that offer literacy programs in communities such as the Houston Center for Literacy (HCL). Currently, the HCL offers classes in the Fifth Ward at Julia C Hester House. Literacy Advance of Houston offers English classes at Sherman Elementary in Near Northside as well as other types of literacy classes throughout the city. Finally, the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation supports Connect 4 Literacy, a program that encourages collaboration with community partners representing education, philanthropy, faith, government, business, health, civic, nonprofit community-based organizations to enable a collective impact framework in geographic areas where there is the greatest need.

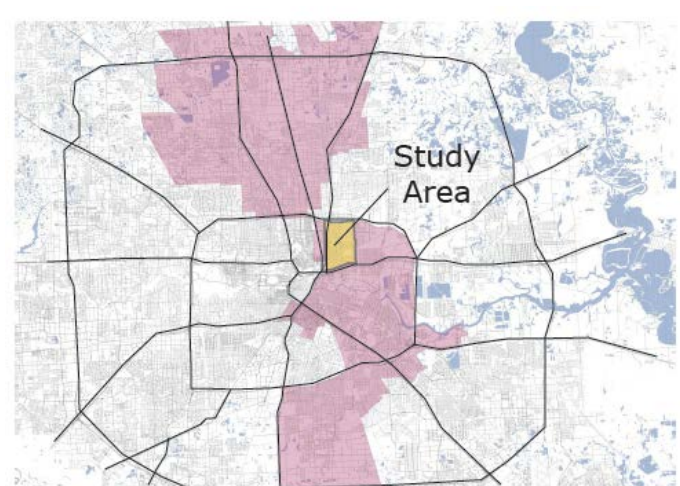
Shortage of dental professionals



Shortage of primary care professionals



Shortage of mental health professionals



7.2 SUPPORT ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS

Seven supermarkets exist within or adjacent to the Kashmere Gardens study area ranging from small shops resembling neighborhood convenience stores, to medium-sized meat markets and large chain grocery stores such as Fiesta Mart. Many of the existing restaurants lack a variety of healthy food options. The management district and city of Houston should promote the establishment of neighborhood groceries in areas where none currently exist within 0.25 miles, an additional large chain grocery retailer to supplement what is currently a limited stock of options, as well as promote the establishment of restaurants that will use a majority of unprocessed, fresh, and healthy foods.

The management district and the Multi-Service Center should work together to educate the community and promote healthy food choices through ongoing outreach. Target Hunger is one of Houston's largest organizations providing direct food distribution to food insecure seniors, children, and families. In Kashmere Gardens, they have multiple resources for residents including food pantries in the 77020, 77026, and 77028 zip codes, as well as the Kashmere Community Garden where families and volunteers are encouraged to "Adopt-A-Plot" to grow the vegetables that are favored by their family. The management district should work with the Multi-Service Center and Target Hunger to ensure residents know about the food resources available to them within the community, and should support establishment of new community gardens as need governs.

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

COH Planning Department

Grocery suppliers and operators

Management District

RESOURCES:

Policies, incentives, site and provider that encourage establishment of grocery stores and local restaurants

Funding for local entrepreneurs interested in providing healthy community food services

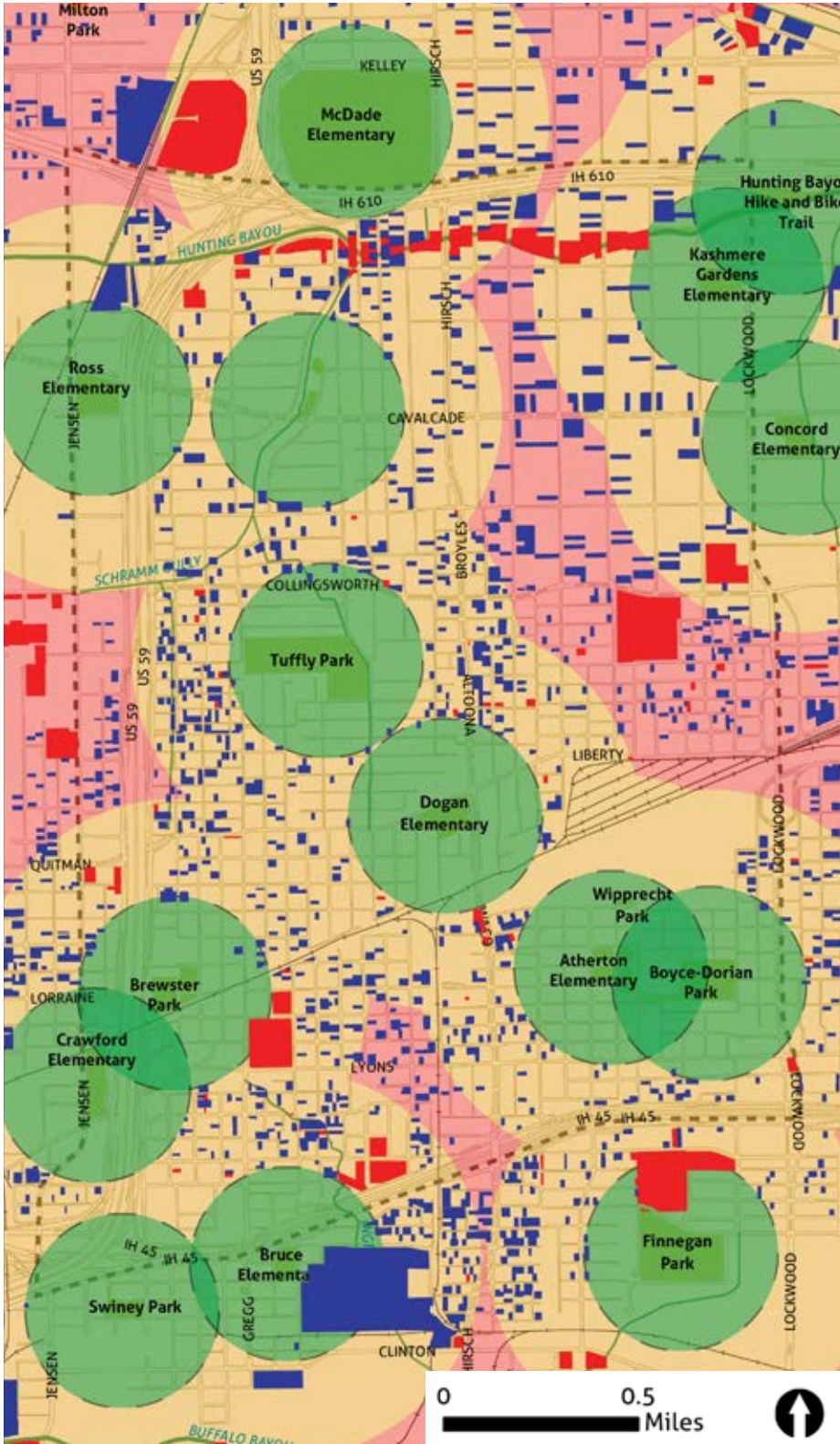
Promote use of vacant land for urban agriculture



Promoting healthy food choices include encouraging and educating residents about the use of the Kashmere Community Garden. (Images: Houston Chronicle)

7.3 SUPPORT ACCESSIBILITY OF OPEN SPACE AND ENCOURAGE ACTIVE USE

The Kashmere Gardens neighborhood has a shortage of open space as demonstrated by the 2015 City of Houston Parks Master Plan. Areas in intermediate or high need of new park space are shown in light orange or pink below. Luckily, an abundance of vacant land in the area, specifically in areas of park need, could allow the city and management district to facilitate land acquisition for community park spaces. The map on the following page shows five areas of focus for park need. The management district and city should prioritize these areas first when acquiring new land for parks.



TYPE:



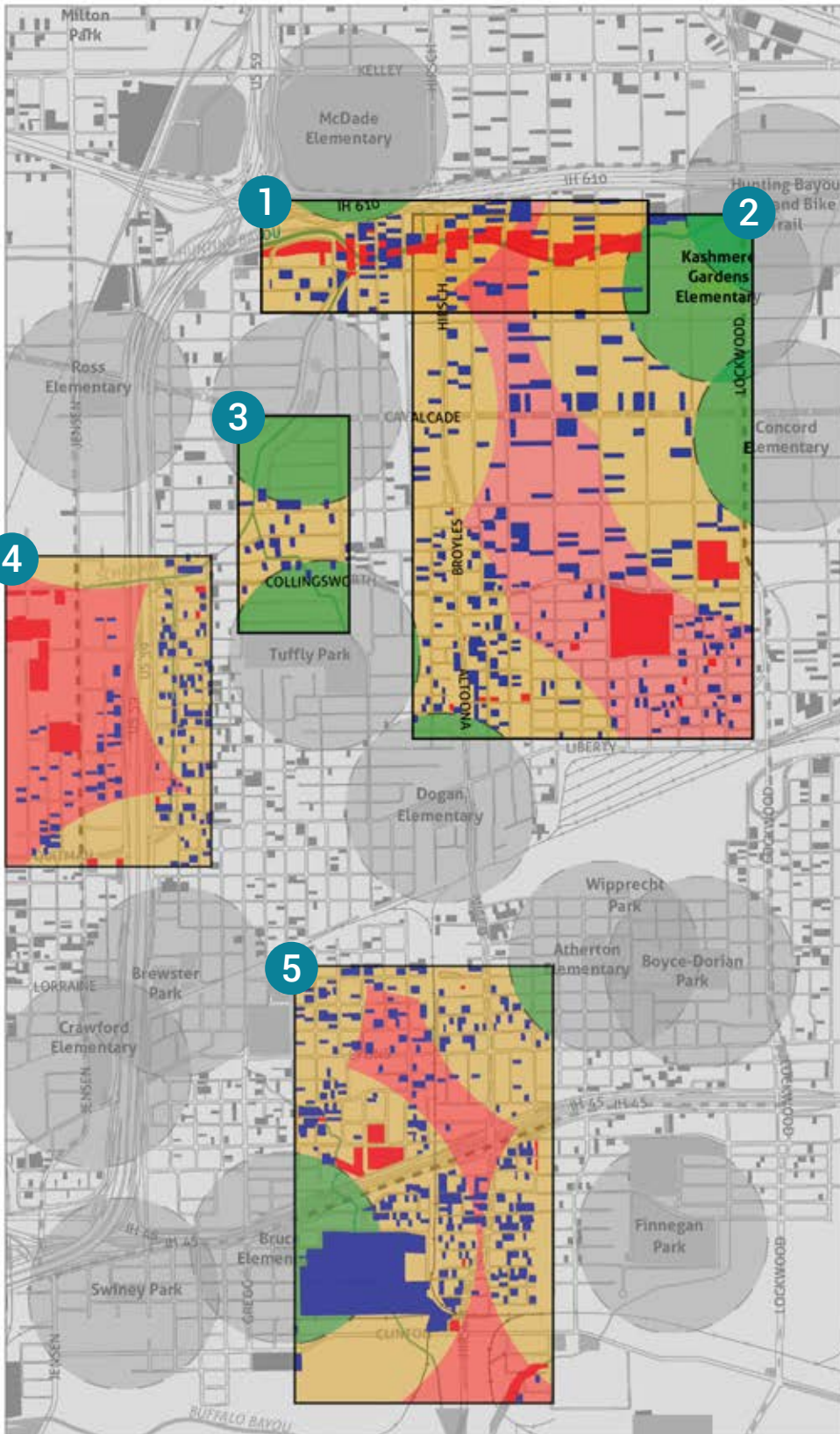
PARTNERS:

- Houston Parks Foundation
- PARD
- Multi-Service Center
- Management District

LEGEND

- Study Area
- Park accessibility needs met - Park within 0.25 miles
- Intermediate need - Park within 0.5 miles
- Highest need - over 0.5 miles from a park
- Vacant land
- Public Land
- Bayous
- Parks
- Creeks & Streamst
- Edge of Pavemen
- Railroads

Park need focus areas.



AREA 1

HUNTING BAYOU GREENWAY

Area one is slated to be developed by the city and Houston Parks Board as a greenway trail by 2020.

AREA 2

KASHMERE CENTRAL HIGH NEED

Area two is the largest and most central high need area within the study boundary with a large geographic area further than 0.5 miles from park space.

AREA 3

HUNTING / TUFFLY CONNECTION

With a Hunting Bayou Greenway extension south down Schramm Gully to Calvalcade, an extension to the Tuffly Park would drive active use of both spaces.

AREA 4

WEST SIDE HIGH NEED

At the study neighborhood's periphery, area 4 shows a high need with a substantial core area unable to access park space within 0.5 miles.

AREA 5

FIFTH WARD HIGH NEED

The study's south end, the northern reaches of the Fifth Ward has limited access to park space within 0.5 miles as shown in area 5.

GOAL 8: BUILD THE CAPACITY OF THE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

To support the improvement of Kashmere Gardens, the Management District must have a clear guide for implementation and resources. Needed actions include items from local development plans to funding strategies that will help the district build capacity.

8.1. DEVELOP AN INITIAL WORKPLAN FOR THE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT, WITH A FOCUS ON ATTRACTING COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC SAFETY, CODE ENFORCEMENT, AND INFORMING THE COMMUNITY.

TYPE:



The Management District should develop a two- to three-year startup workplan that defines strategies, proposes programs and projects, and outlines staffing and budget proposals in order to achieve community priorities. Upon successful completion of the two- to three-year plan, the Management District may elect to adopt a longer-term plan that reflects lessons learned, additional priorities, and funding projections for a 10-15 year timeframe.

Top priorities identified by the community for the Management District's focus in its early years include attracting commercial development, enhancing public safety, and coordinating code enforcement activities and resources to decrease the number of overgrown and dilapidated properties in the neighborhood. Providing information to the community about City and regional programs was another important point of emphasis identified by the Advisory Committee. Some elements of a workplan that could work to address these priorities might include:

Attracting Commercial Development

- Adopting a Development Strategy for Kashmere Gardens and publicizing it to retail trade groups, local businesses, developers, and community development corporations in the Houston region.
- Creating a Placemaking Program that focuses on branding the Kashmere Gardens area and improving public realm elements including sidewalks, street furniture, lighting, landscaping, and banners/branding along retail corridors and at major intersections.
- Administering business development and business education courses on issues such as marketing, financing and SBA loans, and financial management.
- Attracting grant funding for a facade improvement program for existing businesses and rehabilitation projects for vacant existing buildings.

Enhancing Public Safety

- Maintain a database of crime data and work to analyze trends in crime on a quarterly or monthly basis.
- Partner with the Houston Police Department, including their Positive Interaction Program (PIP), to ensure effective and balanced enforcement that targets areas with high crime rates while maintaining a strong community relationship and presence by known local officers.
- Work with local residents to categorize and inventory street light outages and report outages to the City of Houston and CenterPoint Energy.
- Increase street lighting in target areas, and investigate installation of solar lighting along Hunting Bayou with the Houston Parks Board and Flood Control District.

Code Enforcement and Repair Resources

- Work with residents to create a program for reporting illegal dumping, overgrown lots, and safety hazards generated by vacant properties, and ensure that violations are reported to the Inspections and Public Service Division of the Department of Neighborhoods.
- Monitor occupied properties that may need repair and connect homeowners with home repair resources.
- Attract public and private funding for housing investment by working with LARA, local community development financial institutions, and developers to decrease the number of vacant properties in the area and gain development momentum.



New development should be guided by a development strategy to ensure compatibility with existing buildings and an active street life. (Image: Culturemap)



8.2 DEVELOP A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY INCLUDING BRANDING, GRAPHICS AND A WEBSITE

TYPE:



PARTNERS:

COH

Harris County

H-GAC

Many more!

Throughout the community engagement process, residents expressed interest in receiving information about Management District programming, as well additional information about City- and County-offered opportunities such as housing programs, educational resources, and open space / active living resources. Creating a public-facing presence and brand for the Management District will be important to meet this need for ongoing two-way communication with local residents and businesses about their needs and wishes.

Branding and graphic standards will also be essential resources for creating public realm,

placemaking, and streetscape elements that reflect local character and project a consistent look and feel for the Kashmere Gardens community.

As the Management District works to beautify and attract businesses to major intersections, corridors, and highway exits, having a strong brand for the area will assist in helping visitors and consumers understand the neighborhood they are shopping in, while also reflecting community character and pride along local commercial corridors and in the area's public spaces.



Placemaking strategies such as branding and street signs would help designate Kashmere Gardens as a unique place.

8.3 DEVELOP A PLAN FOR FUNDING SOURCES AND STAFFING

TYPE:



Because the revenue from commercial property assessments accruing to the Management District is currently relatively low, leveraging complementary funding sources to staff NNMD programs and operations on a full-time basis will be important to move NNMD's mission and vision forward. The NNMD itself can leverage public grants and loans for transportation and streetscape improvements, while the associated Near Northside Management District Foundation can bring in grant dollars for programming related to community health, public art, community engagement

and education, and other valid non-profit purposes. Developing an initial workplan and budget that reflects this diversity of potential funding sources should be a high priority.

The initial workplan should include estimates of funding needed to hire full-time or part-time staff to make progress on the NNMD's initial service plan goals. While current staffing has helped establish the management district's vision, dedicated staff will be needed to allow the district to advance its goals and make progress on initial workplan items in order to facilitate long-term sustainability.

8.4 BUILD ON PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE CITY, COUNTY AND REGIONAL ENTITIES

TYPE:



Partnerships and coordination with city and regional strategies will be critical for the NNMD's success in its early years. Kashmere Gardens is benefiting from projects including Bayou Greenways; City home repair initiatives; sidewalk replacement projects; Hunting Bayou water management improvements; and many more. Residents, employers, employees, and visitors should have a strong voice in these initiatives and should count on the management

district to leverage these new resources and assets for greater good with federal transportation dollars, local grant resources, and connections to jobs and opportunity for local residents. Maintaining strong partnerships also will keep the NNMD aware of new funding sources and projects coming through the pipeline in order to strategically incorporate complementary projects into the management district's service plan.



Partnerships are key to bringing new amenities to the neighborhood.



IMPLEMENTATION

The Implementation section of the Kashmere Gardens Livable Centers Study examines resources, stakeholders, and assets that can be utilized to further the realization of the Conceptual Plan. The City of Houston's relatively light regulatory environment means that there are fewer codes that need to be navigated or changed in order to realize desired development outcomes. This section enumerates relevant codes and regulations that may still apply to the recommendations, but focuses primarily on partners and funding sources that can incentivize the private market to reach desired development outcomes and "tip" the market toward the realization of community needs and desires.

A CLEAR PATH FORWARD

Each of the recommendations in the Conceptual Plan is enumerated in this section with partners and funding sources identified in order to provide clarity about how the NNMD and its partners can move forward to create a more livable, sustainable Kashmere Gardens that will enable residents to benefit from the positive changes and investment that are projected.

REVIEW OF STAKEHOLDER ASSETS AND ABILITIES

The following table outlines various opportunities that each stakeholder has to participate in economic development activity and infrastructure financing.

A. NEAR NORTHSIDE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Purpose:

The Near Northside Management District was established by state legislature as a tool for economic development and revitalization of the area.

Assets:

Assessments from commercial property owners and grants

Abilities:

Security and Public Safety, Business Development, Visual and Infrastructure Improvements, Services and Maintenance, Communications and Marketing, etc.

Termination:

The District does not terminate.

Geography:

The District covers the whole of the study area.

B. FIFTH WARD REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TIRZ 18)/ FIFTH WARD COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Purpose:

To establish a framework and create conditions for redevelopment to occur that will stabilize a declining tax base, establish the basis for a consistency of land uses and strengthen the character of residential and commercial properties

Assets:

Property Value/ Increment

Abilities:

Historic Preservation, Roadway/ Sidewalk Construction, Water/ Sewer Construction, Brownfield Remediation, Demolition Costs, Area Park and Recreation Redevelopment, Gateway Improvements, Streetscape, Landscape and Lighting Improvements, Bus Stop/ Shelter Improvements, Land Acquisition, Development, Redevelopment, Affordable Housing, etc.

Termination:

The TIRZ will terminate in 2029.

Geography:

The TIRZ covers much of Lyons Avenue in the south of the study area.

C. THE CITY OF HOUSTON

Purpose:

"...City Council shall... enact and enforce all ordinances necessary to protect life, health, and property; to prevent and summarily abate and remove nuisances; to preserve and promote good government, order, security, amusement, peace, quiet, education, prosperity and the general welfare of said City and its inhabitants..."

Assets:

Taxes, Fees, Assessments, Fines, Grants, and Departmental Resources

Abilities:

Mayor's Office of Economic Development

Tax Increment Districts, 380 Agreements, DPC, etc.

Planning and Development Services

Chapter 42, MTFP

Public Works and Engineering

CIP, Rebuild Houston

Housing and Community Development

LARA, Affordable Housing

Parks and Recreation

Termination:

The City exists in perpetuity.

D. OTHER IMPORTANT STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to the aforementioned primary stakeholders, the study area enjoys the support of a series of other stakeholders, each with unique charters and capacities to help with economic development, infrastructure and other planning initiatives. The following is a partial list of those entities:

1. The Houston Parks Board (HPB):

Parkland acquisition

2. Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT):

Road and mobility improvements via the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

3. Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC):

H-GAC is the regional organization through which local governments consider issues and cooperate in solving area wide problems, including transportation planning.

4. Harris County:

Commissioners Court's functions include, but area not limited to, building and maintenance of county roads, bridges, parks and libraries.

PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

During the second public engagement meeting, participants were asked to help prioritize the recommendations that would provide the greatest catalyst to reaching the community's vision. The results of the public vote are enumerated in the charts below, together with the resources and partners required to realize these recommendations.

GOAL 1: ENSURE THAT THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS FROM NEW INVESTMENT		RESOURCES REQUIRED	PARTNERS
1.1	Create an overall development strategy to inform public and private investment	Adoption of strategic development strategy principles. Identification of key initial development nodes for coordinated investment in commercial, residential, public realm, and transportation strategies. Prioritize food access.	Management District; Local and citywide developers and CDCs; City of Houston; grocery suppliers
1.2	Apply Complete Communities principles	N/A; Follow up with Council Member Edwards	N/A
GOAL 2: INCREASE HIGH QUALITY HOUSING OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS OF ALL INCOME LEVELS		RESOURCES REQUIRED	PARTNERS
2.1	Attract public and private funding to jump start the housing market	LARA expansion of boundaries above Collingsworth to push forward strategic development sites; Connect renters to matched Individual Development Account (IDA) programs, like the one offered by Covenant Community Capital, to assist them in saving for homeownership; Coordinate actions with Management District public realm improvements; Attract philanthropic funds to start a loan pool that can begin lending for home repair and/or small homebuyer second mortgages and attract CRA credit investment from banks in the future.	LARA; Management District; CDFIs with IDA programs, such as Covenant Community Capital; CDFI to house loan pool funds; Philanthropic partners; Banks with CRA obligations
2.2	Develop a community-based home repair program and direct residents to City home repair resources	\$50,000 grant will cover about 10 homes including inspections, materials, and volunteer training; Community-based organization to source and coordinate local volunteer groups (e.g. churches) and identify team leaders for each home within those groups; Volunteer training, materials, and home inspections provided by Rebuilding Together utilizing grant funds. City home repair resources available through Housing & Community Development.	Management District to secure grant funds; Community-based organization (or NNMD) to recruit and coordinate with volunteer groups, identify team leaders; Rebuilding Together; Local volunteer groups from churches, companies, other orgs; COH Housing & CD Dept.

						2.3	Increase community development corporation (CDC) presence and capacity	Facilitate CDC acquisition of properties and land from public agencies and REO (bank-owned) sources; Partner with citywide CDCs to explore opportunities for gap financing to address rising development costs; Ensure renters who would like to move toward ownership have access to homebuyer counseling and credit counseling.	City of Houston Housing & Community Development; LARA; Houston Area Urban CDC (HAUCDC); Houston Area Urban League; Fifth Ward CRC
						2.4	Develop a resilient housing strategy for areas within the 100-year floodplain	Design strategies for housing on residential lots; Account for impact of Hunting Bayou improvements.	City of Houston Green Building Resource Center; Flood Control District
						2.5	Coordinate with the City of Houston's housing plan efforts.	Work with the Housing & Community Development Department.	City of Houston Housing & Comm. Dev. Department
						2.6	Conduct outreach on tax exemption programs for seniors, the disabled, and veterans.	Management District resources.	Management District; Harris County Appraisal District

GOAL 3: LEVERAGE OPPORTUNITIES CREATED BY EXISTING LARGE INFRASTRUCTURE							RESOURCES REQUIRED	PARTNERS
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						3.1	Designate gateways to the neighborhood, identify sites for new retail and develop a public realm urban design strategy	Marketing of target redevelopment sites to potential developers; Recruitment of potential tenants for redevelopment sites; Funding for design and construction; Funding for gateways.	Design Consultant; Mayor's Office of Economic Development; COH Dept. of Public Works and Engineering; H-GAC; Management District
						3.2	Identify railroad crossings for quiet zones and separated grade crossings	Designate a "Community Project Champion" to lead the effort; City of Houston participation as the public entity with authorization; Coordination of meetings; Quiet Zone: \$150K - \$500K; Grade Separation: \$10 million - \$30 million (Examples: TIFIA grants, TIGER grants, public/private partnership, Formula Program funds); Guide to Establishing Quiet Zones - 49 CFR Part 222 Appx. C.	Management District; Federal Rail Administration; Union Pacific; TxDOT; H-GAC; COH Dept. of Public Works and Engineering; Local Elected Officials
						3.3	Right-size major thoroughfares and continue neighborhood street improvements	Update major thoroughfare plan; Updated traffic study to justify reduction in roadway capacity; Design and construction documents; Funding for design and construction.	COH Planning and Development Department with Dept. of Public Works and Engineering; H-GAC; Management District

					3.4	Improve the community's relationship with the railways, with a focus on safety and transportation programs in schools	Community Initiative and Contact(s)	UP; HISD; Local Universities
					3.5	Coordinate with Project Hunting and facilitate communication with the community. Specific emphasis should be placed on night lighting of the Bayou trail.	Programming and funding to carry-out community awareness campaigns about changes that may affect transportation, flood insurance rates, etc. Explore solar lighting opportunities for trail.	Harris County Flood Control District; Houston Parks Board; Multi-service Center; Management District

GOAL 4: ALIGN CITYWIDE PLANS WITH THE COMMUNITY'S GOALS						RESOURCES REQUIRED	PARTNERS
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					4.1	Pilot METRO Community Connector	\$500,000 to fund two vehicles and marketing for one year pilot; Potential funding sources include the FTA Bus & Bus Facilities "Ladders of Opportunity" Initiative (This awarded all funds in 2014, but could be renewed).	METRO; Management District; H-GAC
					4.2	Address areas of high park need according to the Houston Parks Plan	Funding to expand existing park space and create new park space; Programming to provide outreach and engage community members with parks; Funding to improve existing park facilities.	City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department; Houston Parks Board; Houston Independent School District; Management District
					4.3	Build Bikeways proposed in the Houston Bike Plan	Updated traffic study to justify reduction in roadway capacity; Design and construction documents; Funding for design and construction.	COH Dept. of Public Works and Engineering; H-GAC; Management District

GOAL 5: OPTIMIZE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS AND AWARENESS						RESOURCES REQUIRED	PARTNERS
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					5.1	Address soil contamination near Liberty Road	A Champion to monitor regulatory issues and permit conditions; EPA's Environmental Health Resources For Community Members .	Management District; City of Houston; Harris County; TCEQ; EPA
					5.2	Coordinate tree planting efforts to provide highway buffer areas	Access to City of Houston/LARA lots; Funding to pay for two years of tree watering (\$150/tree total); City approval for tree planting; Coordinated actions with Management District public realm improvements.	Trees for Houston; Management District; H-GAC Community Trees Grant Program

		5.3	Collaborate with Trees for Houston to increase capacity for tree care	Programming with the Multi-service center, Management District, and Trees for Houston to complete outreach to advertise tree maintenance training sessions (Trees for Houston will provide training free of charge).	Trees for Houston; Management District
		5.4	Facilitate removal of unnecessary impervious cover	Approval of property owners (on vacant land) or City (on city-owned vacant land or right-of-ways); Funding for removal.	City of Houston Public Works Department; Harris County Flood Control District; Management District
		5.5	Promote improved water quality and hydrology through green infrastructure projects on vacant land	Policy to promote or incentivize green infrastructure improvements over traditional gray infrastructure; Funding to provide professional expertise to prioritize potential green infrastructure sites, design green infrastructure projects, and implement designed projects; Community toolkit providing steps for implementing green infrastructure improvements on vacant land.	City of Houston Public Works Department; Harris County Flood Control District; Houston-Galveston Area Council; Management District

GOAL 6: SUPPORT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

RESOURCES REQUIRED

PARTNERS

		6.1	Expand job recruitment and training programs through local hiring programs with corporations that have workforce needs nearby, and in partnership with Kashmere High School's STEM Magnet Program	Coordination with existing non-profit and private-sector training programs through local non-profits such as ProUnitas	Kashmere High School; ProUnitas; Houston Area Urban League; Local corporations and railroads; Texas Southern University's Maritime Certification Program developed with the Port of Houston Authority
		6.2	Invest in existing businesses through streetscape improvements and facade improvement programs, with a focus on the Can Do Houston pilot Healthy Corner Store site (location TBD)	Management District Resources	Management District; Can Do Houston; H-GAC Downtown Public Spaces Improvement Program

						6.3	Support and connect residents to the Lyons Ave Renaissance business development programs, and look for opportunities to extend activities to the northern part of the study area	Coordination with and referrals to Fifth Ward CRC programs for entrepreneurship and business development, potentially through the Kashmere Multi-Service Center; Houston Area Urban League entrepreneurship and business development workshops.	Fifth Ward CRC; Houston Area Urban League; Kashmere Multi-Service Center
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GOAL 7: PROMOTE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES							RESOURCES REQUIRED	PARTNERS
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						7.1	Ensure primary, dental, mental, and women's healthcare resources are available	Funding and non-profit partnerships to support programs that provide literacy training through the multi-service center; Funding to support community outreach to ensure community members know what health-related resources are available locally; and, to dispel any negative stigma associated with proactively seeking health care.	Multi-Service Center; City of Houston Health Department; Management District; Harris County health care facility
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						7.2	Support access to healthy food options	Policies, incentives, site and provider that encourage establishment of grocery stores and local restaurants; Funding for local entrepreneurs interested in providing healthy community food services; Promote use of vacant land for urban agriculture	City of Houston Planning Department; Management District; Grocery suppliers and operators
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						7.3	Support accessibility of open space and encourage active use	Policy supporting connected pedestrian and open spaces; Support and community investment in Bayou Greenways 2020; Policy to support pocket parks throughout neighborhood connected to larger parks and greenways; Programs to promote community active living.	Houston Parks Foundation; PARD; Multi-service center; Management District
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GOAL 8: BUILD THE CAPACITY OF THE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT							RESOURCES REQUIRED	PARTNERS
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						8.1	Develop an initial workplan, with a focus on attracting commercial development, public safety, code enforcement, and informing the community	Management District Staff; Funding for Staff. Incorporate one education program per month for community members.	N/A
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	8.2	Develop a communications strategy, including branding, graphics and website	Management District Staff; Funding for Staff	N/A
	8.3	Develop a plan for funding sources and staffing	Management District Staff; Funding for Staff	N/A
	8.4	Build on partnerships with the City, County, and regional entities	Management District Staff; Funding for Staff	City of Houston, Harris County, H-GAC, and more.

ACTION ITEMS

Based on the voting, the following recommendations are made on initial action steps for the following stakeholders:

A. NEAR NORTHSIDE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

1. Develop a two to three year workplan for the Management District, with a focus on attracting commercial development, public safety, and code enforcement.
2. Seek grant funding to implement the METRO Community Connector, to develop a community-based home repair program, and to participate in the development of healthy food and improved health access within the community.
3. Continue to develop partnerships with CDCs, neighboring communities, the City and other implementing agents.

B. CITY OF HOUSTON

1. Expand the LARA Boundaries to take in the whole of the study area.
2. Update the Major Thoroughfare Plan based on the study recommendations.

AIR QUALITY ASSESSMENT

One objective of the overall Livable Centers Program is to fund strategic infrastructure investments to improve safety and mobility for non-motorized travel. Several of the project recommendations are to provide attractive and functional sidewalks in the areas in which they are most needed, specifically on major commercial corridors which are not currently friendly to pedestrian transportation due to lack of sidewalks, or deterioration of existing facilities. Other improvements enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety in ways that will make these travel modes safer and more attractive. Improvements are also recommended for transit accessibility. In many communities, these improvements would allow for a modest decrease in the anticipated automobile trips, vehicle miles travelled and associated vehicle emissions, however, in Kashmere Gardens, where the community has a lower than average income for the region, and all census tracts within the study area have a higher than average percentage of people already commuting by modes other than single occupancy vehicle. As such, the proposed improvements will provide economic, aesthetic, safety and health benefits, but are unlikely to provide significant air quality benefits.

HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a process by which to evaluate the potential health effects of a plan prior to implementation. HIAs aid decision-makers in understanding both the potential positive and negative health impacts of a plan with the goal of increasing positive health impacts and minimizing negative ones. There are several steps to complete an HIA including: 1. Screening - Identifying parts of a plan for which an HIA would be relevant; 2. Scoping - Identifying what health risks and benefits to consider; 3. Assessment - Identifying who will be affected by implementation of specific plan recommendations; 4. Recommendations - Suggestions for action to promote benefits and mitigate negative impacts; 5. Reporting - Presentation of HIA results; and, 6. Monitoring and Evaluation - to determine the HIAs impact after implementation. In the table on these and the following pages, steps 2, 3, and 6 are listed for plan goals related to community health. Goals were screened prior to completing the assessment. Step 4 - recommendations - can be found throughout the document regarding each goal; and, step 5 - reporting - will be completed by the Management district upon completion of the plan.

1

ENSURE THAT THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS FROM NEW INVESTMENT

Potential Health Impacts:

Complete communities include opportunity for quality education, access to good jobs, affordable housing, access to affordable healthy food and health services, the ability to enjoy artistic, spiritual and cultural amenities, access to recreation and parks, meaningful civic engagement, and affordable transportation choices. This holistic goal for community benefit is articulated more directly in the Goals 2 through 8 but is of the utmost importance to improving community health. This unified approach recognizes that health risk is tied to many intersecting factors including economics, housing, employment, food, active living, and cultural value.

Affected Populations and Measurable Health Impacts:

In unison, these principles have exponentially more impact than any goal below has individually for people living in the Kashmere Gardens community, especially for a community with on average, younger neighborhood residents with lower levels of educational attainment, and lower income than residents citywide.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:

The Management district and other key stakeholders are responsible for implementing recommendations made in the Kashmere Gardens Livable Centers Study. As recommendations are implemented, number of residents benefitted should be recorded for each goal. Additionally, the City of Houston and the Department of Health and Human Services conducts a Community Health Profile every 2-3 years. Changes to this profile should be noted as they correspond to recommendations implemented.

Citation:

Reconnecting America. 2012. "Are We There Yet? Creating Complete Communities for 21st Century America." <http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/assets/PDFs/20121001AreWeThereYet-web.pdf>. Accessed November 2016.

Traffic Engineers Inc. et al. 2013. Healthy Living Matters: Built Environment and Food Access Assessment. Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services.

2

INCREASE HIGH-QUALITY HOUSING OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS OF ALL INCOME LEVELS

Potential Health Impacts:

People with stability in housing are more likely to lead healthy and active lifestyles and seek out regular health care. Housing quality and stability also significantly improves individual mental health.

Affected Populations and Measurable Health Impacts:

On average, residents of Kashmere Gardens are not cost-burdened. However, much of the housing stock is aging, and improvements to existing stock as well as new housing investments are needed to promote housing choice. Many of the neighborhood's buildings are considered "Average" and below with a number of properties rated "Poor," "Very Poor," and even "Unsound." Home repair programs could alleviate some of the financial burden of ensuring homeowners are rehabilitating their home to make them safe and secure in the long-term. However, building condition may be part of why housing remains affordable and measures should be put in place to protect residents from displacement as rehabilitation of buildings increases both rent and property tax costs. Lead-abatement programs are currently available and will become more visible as part of home repair programming - leading to direct reductions in health risk for residents exposed to lead hazards. Finally, while the floodplain will be significantly reduced after improvements are completed along Hunting Bayou, remaining housing in the floodplain should be targeted for improvements that improve flood resiliency and protect families from direct and indirect health risks associate with flood, as well as displacement.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:

The Management District should work with stakeholders in the community and implementers of the community-based home repair program to monitor the number of houses benefitted from program as well as any corresponding change in housing expenses or other benefit or detriment for those affected by implementation.

Citation:

Johns Hopkins Center to Eliminate Cardiovascular Health Disparities. 2016. "Influences on Health: Stable Housing." http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-to-eliminate-cardiovascular-health-disparities/about/influences_on_health/stable_housing.html. Accessed December 2016.

Boston College. "For low-income families, substandard housing takes toll on children." ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 22 October 2013. <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/10/131022132145.htm>. Accessed December 2016.

3

LEVERAGE OPPORTUNITIES CREATED BY EXISTING LARGE INFRASTRUCTURE

Potential Health Impacts:

Reintroducing commercial uses to vacant land can offer new job opportunities for area residents. Stable employment is key to establishing healthy communities as economic stability is necessary to individuals seeking regular preventative healthcare. Street and rail improvements and reallocations have a direct health impact on pedestrians, by encouraging active transportation and reducing the number injuries and deaths from traffic and rail crashes.

Affected Populations and Measurable Health Impacts:

Unemployed or underemployed residents will have more employment opportunity within the community. Residents without cars who, for their main form of transportation walk will be less likely to be involved in pedestrian-car or pedestrian-train accidents. All residents will have safer opportunities to walk, bike and ride transit.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:

The management district should monitor changes to the number of jobs available within the Kashmere Gardens community, how many of those jobs are being filled by community members, employment benefit packages and wage levels to ensure the community is directly benefitting from new commercial interests. The management district should monitor the number of pedestrian injuries and fatalities and how the number of incidences corresponds to any improvements implemented as part of the below recommendations. Pedestrian and cyclists counts should also be taken to track increases in these modes of transportation.

Citation:

Buehler, R, Götschi, T, Winters, M. Moving Toward Active Transportation: How Policies Can Encourage Walking and Bicycling. San Diego, CA: Active Living Research; 2016.

4

ALIGN CITYWIDE PLANS WITH THE COMMUNITY'S GOALS

Potential Health Impacts:

Alignment with citywide plans will ensure Kashmere Gardens residents receive the most benefit in their community from the implementation of various citywide plans. The METRO Community Connector will increase community transportation options, directly impacting community health by increasing access to healthcare facilities and opportunities for active transportation. Addressing areas in need of parks and open space as well as the creation of neighborhood bikeways and the Hunting Bayou Greenway will all impact opportunities for active living. Access to park space has direct health benefits and leads to residents spending measurably more time being active, leading to decreases in heart problems, diabetes, obesity, and other issues related to cardiovascular health. Individuals who spend more time outdoors are shown to have fewer mental health issues including lower rates of depression and anxiety. Finally, children who spend more time outdoors have a higher likelihood of receiving better scores on academic tests.

Affected Populations and Measurable Health Impacts:

According to the Community Health Profile completed by the Houston Department of Health and Human Services, higher proportions of residents in Area B reported having coronary heart disease (5.3%) and stroke (4.1%) than residents in the City of Houston and the residents in Harris County. A higher proportion of adults in Area B are diagnosed with high blood pressure. Almost 50 percent of 18 to 44 years old were considered obese compared to 28.0 percent in the City of Houston. A higher proportion of those 45 to 64 years old were considered obese in Area B (50.9%) than the same age in the City of Houston (32.7%). A higher proportion of females in Area B (14.0%) experienced severe psychological distress during the past 12 months than females in Harris County (10.1%). Increased access to transportation and park space should decrease rates of health issues listed above.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:

The management district should utilize the Community Health Profile to track health changes over time as they may correspond to the implementation of various transportation and park access plans.

Citation:

Traffic Engineers Inc. et al. 2013. Healthy Living Matters: Built Environment and Food Access Assessment. Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services.

5

OPTIMIZE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS AND AWARENESS

Potential Health Impacts:

Recommendations in goal 5 are aimed at directly mitigating environmental hazards. Specifically, soil contamination remediation would eliminate the substantial health effects associated with exposure to brownfield and superfund sites throughout the neighborhood. Tree planting efforts neighborhood-wide, and specifically in buffer areas near highways, would significantly reduce air particulate matter within those buffer areas - many of which include single-family residential land use. Highway air pollution, when unmitigated, can cause numerous health problems such as asthma and other chronic illnesses. Finally, Improving the hydrology of the area will reduce flood risk and the occurrence of standing water - the latter of which will reduce the transmission of mosquito-borne disease.

Affected Populations and Measurable Health Impacts:

Fewer residents will suffer from illness related to exposure to toxic levels of chemicals found at brownfield and superfund sites. Fewer people will suffer from respiratory problems. Reduced flood risk neighborhood-wide will lessen the likelihood of displacement after storm events. And finally, the transmission of mosquito-borne disease will be reduced.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:

The management district should utilize the Community Health Profile to track health changes over time as they may correspond to the implementation of various remediation, air pollution mitigation, and hydrological restoration projects.

Citation:

Science Communication Unit, University of the West of England, Bristol. 2013. Science for Environment Policy In-depth Report: Soil Contamination: Impacts on Human Health. Report produced for the European Commission DG Environment, September 2013. http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/pdf/IR5_en.pdf. Accessed December 2016.

6

SUPPORT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Potential Health Impacts:

People with stable jobs are more likely to seek out regular and preventative healthcare, and have the financial ability to support health needs for themselves and their family.

Affected Populations and Measurable Health Impacts:

Unemployed or underemployed residents will have more employment opportunity within the community.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:

The management district should monitor changes to the number of jobs available within the Kashmere Gardens community, how many of those jobs are being filled by community members, employment benefit packages and wage levels to ensure the community is directly benefitting from new commercial interests.

Citation:

Center for Advancing Health. 2013. "Unemployment Linked to Reduced Use of Preventive Health Care." <http://www.cfah.org/hbns/2013/unemployment-linked-to-reduced-use-of-preventive-healthcare>. Accessed December 2016.

7

PROMOTE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Potential Health Impacts:

The biggest barrier to healthcare in Kashmere is awareness. Outreach campaigns and literacy programs can remedy some of the current issues with residents' knowledge of community resources. If more residents are aware of programs and resources available to them, they are more likely to seek out regular healthcare visits, reduce long-term costs associated with healthcare, remain healthier overall, and potentially catch more serious health concerns in early stages when they are easier to treat.

Affected Populations and Measurable Health Impacts:

With a below 37% literacy rate, a majority of Kashmere Gardens residents would directly benefit from literacy programs within the community, thereby increasing the likelihood that community health related outreach efforts are successful. Additionally, access to healthcare facilities and regular health screenings will positively impact rates of specific health issues in the community that are currently heightened as compared to Houston's overall occurrences of the same health problems.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:

The management district should utilize the Community Health Profile to track health changes over time as they may correspond to the implementation of various literacy and community health outreach programs.

Citation:

DeWalt, Darren A., et al. 2004. "Literacy and Health Outcomes: A Systematic Review of the Literature." *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 19(12): 1228–1239. Online at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1492599/>. Accessed December 2016.

Source: <http://www.houstontx.gov/health/chs/2014CommunityHealthProfile%20Area%20B-Nov%202014.pdf>

