

Executive Summary

Washington Avenue has a variable right-of-way that serves commercial and residential uses well. Traffic patterns on Washington Avenue show that the corridor does not display the typical “commuter” pattern; instead, traffic volumes are higher in the “inbound” direction at all hours of the day. Traffic modeling further reveals that vehicular operations are generally good along the Washington Avenue corridor, although congestion was observed in a few locations during the peak hours. Many people walk and bike across Washington Avenue to get between the nearby Bayou Greenways.

This can be challenging because of the limited opportunities for safe crossing along the corridor due to the scarcity of signalized intersections and crosswalks. Over the past five years, just over 1,000 crashes have occurred along the study area corridor. More than 350 people have been injured in these crashes—including 19 seriously—and one person has been killed. Speeding and failure to maintain a lane or changing a lane unsafely were top overall contributing factors.

A deeper analysis reveals several intersection crash hotspots as well as a 7-block segment of particular concern: Washington Ave between TC Jester Blvd and Durham Dr sees a highly disproportionate share of overall crashes, late-night crashes, pedestrian crashes, and serious injury crashes. The peak hour overall for crashes along the entire corridor is 2:00-3:00am, with many of these late-night crashes concentrated on the segment between TC Jester and Durham. Finally, the crash data shows pedestrians in particular danger on the corridor.

While just 2% of all crashes involved a pedestrian, pedestrians represented 26% of all serious injury crash victims. A pedestrian is 28 times more likely to be seriously injured compared to all people involved in a crash within the study area.



Public feedback was conclusive around the vision and goals for the Washington Avenue Corridor.

Existing conditions research formed the foundation for the Washington Avenue Corridor Study.

- Washington Avenue has been one of Houston's main streets for almost 200 years.
- Washington Avenue is a bustling commercial corridor that both serves the immediate neighborhood and draws people from around the region.
- There is a lot of parking along Washington Avenue, but it can be confusing to use and most is privately owned.
- In the last 12 years, 5,550 housing units have been added within a few blocks of Washington Avenue.
- Washington Avenue is on a ridge between watersheds, and it's a crucial connection during flood events.
- Washington is lined with mixed use buildings built up to the street.
- METRO Rt 85 moves people far beyond Washington Avenue.
- Washington Avenue is an important east-west traffic route for a series of neighborhoods.
- Washington Avenue's sidewalks are narrow and uncomfortable.
- There is no east-west bike connection through the neighborhood.
- Traffic patterns on Washington Avenue show that it is used more as a local connector than a commuter corridor.
- Crossing Washington Avenue is very challenging, especially when you are not at a signalized intersection.
- The right-of-way (ROW) is limited along parts of Washington Avenue.
- Crash data reveal several dangerous hotspots on Washington Avenue, with pedestrians significantly more vulnerable to serious injury.
- Center Street parallels Washington Avenue for the majority of its length and provides signalized crossings at most primary north/south streets. However, while Washington Ave has more traffic and crashes, Center Street still has some concerning safety patterns.
- There are many existing policies and previous studies that make recommendations for Washington Avenue.

The Washington Avenue Corridor Study began in December 2023 and has had continual engagement with the Steering Committee as well as multiple presentations at Superneighborhood 22 meetings, other area Civic Club meetings, a neighborhood focus group meeting, and four in-depth rounds of public engagement.

The preliminary round of community engagement for the Washington Avenue Corridor Study was rooted in teaching people what the project team had learned about the corridor and learning from locals about their needs and desires for the main street in their neighborhood. The information collected during that first round of input (summarized on this page), along with the project team's research of the existing conditions of the corridor, formed the Washington Avenue Corridor Study's vision and goals.

- The corridor feels unsafe regardless of how people travel.
- Important connections to ped/bike trails, transit, and major destinations are missing.
- Most buildings lack a strong relationship to the street and places to sit and eat outside.
- People want to feel safe.
- People imagine pleasant outdoor common areas.
- People want transportation options.
- People want to see a thriving, sustainable, livable Washington Corridor.

VISION

The Washington Avenue Corridor is a thriving, sustainable, livable neighborhood.

GOALS

because it....

- **Works effectively.**
- **Is safe for all users.**
- **Connects into a network.**
- **Is a great place with happy residents and prosperous businesses.**



The seven alternatives presented a spectrum of spatial tradeoffs.

A critical part of the Washington Avenue Corridor Study process was creating multiple alternative designs for the corridor to evaluate and present to the public for feedback. The creation of the alternatives began with the process of understanding the current condition of the corridor area and learning what the public desired for the future of the corridor.

Prior to the presentation of the seven final alternatives, the project team hosted a Neighborhood Focus Group with the help of Superneighborhood 22 to look at the major segments of the corridor and to see what types of designs people preferred for each one. This allowed people to give input on very local and specific conditions prior to the project team creating corridor wide design alternatives. At this meeting, it was also discussed what should be included in the baseline for all alternatives.



Neighborhood Focus Group Meeting



Neighborhood Focus Group Meeting

Alternative A: Two wide vehicular lanes each direction with turn lanes

This alternative makes the lanes 12 feet all along Washington, widening it in some places. This creates an environment with limited space for greenery like trees and plantings next to accessible sidewalks. In this alternative, painted sharrows are added to Center Street.

Alternative B: Two vehicular lanes each direction with a median and turn lanes

This alternative has vehicular lanes that are 11' on the curb and 10' in the center. It includes turn lanes at major intersections and medians with trees elsewhere. It adds accessible sidewalks and street trees.

Alternative C: One vehicular lane and one bus-only lane with right turns

This alternative has one vehicular lane and one travel lane for buses only in each direction, creating more reliable and on-time transit. Vehicles use the bus-only lane for right turns at major intersections.

Alternative D: One vehicular lane with a right turn lane and wide sidewalks

This alternative has one vehicular lane in each direction shared with buses, with right turn lanes at major intersections. The additional space is allocated to a large pedestrian realm with room for large street trees, outdoor dining, and public space.

Alternative E: One vehicular lane and off-street bike lanes on Washington

This alternative has one vehicular lane in each direction that is shared with buses. The additional space is allocated to an off-street bike path behind the curb at sidewalk level and street trees.

Alternative F: One vehicular lane plus center-running transit Downtown to Heights Blvd

This alternative has one vehicular lane in each direction with center-running light rail or bus rapid transit east of Heights Blvd. West of Heights Blvd, Washington has two vehicle lanes.

Alternative G: One vehicular lane plus center-running transit Downtown to Northwest TC

This alternative has one vehicular lane in each direction with center-running light rail or bus rapid transit. Northwest of the roundabout, there are two vehicle lanes southbound and one northbound with turn lanes and crosswalks.



Alternative A



Alternative B



Alternative C



Alternative D



Alternative E



Alternative F

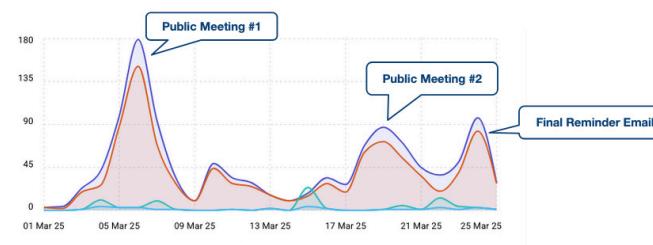


Alternative G

While wide sidewalks were a popular alternative, the public consensus around prioritizing space for transit was clear.

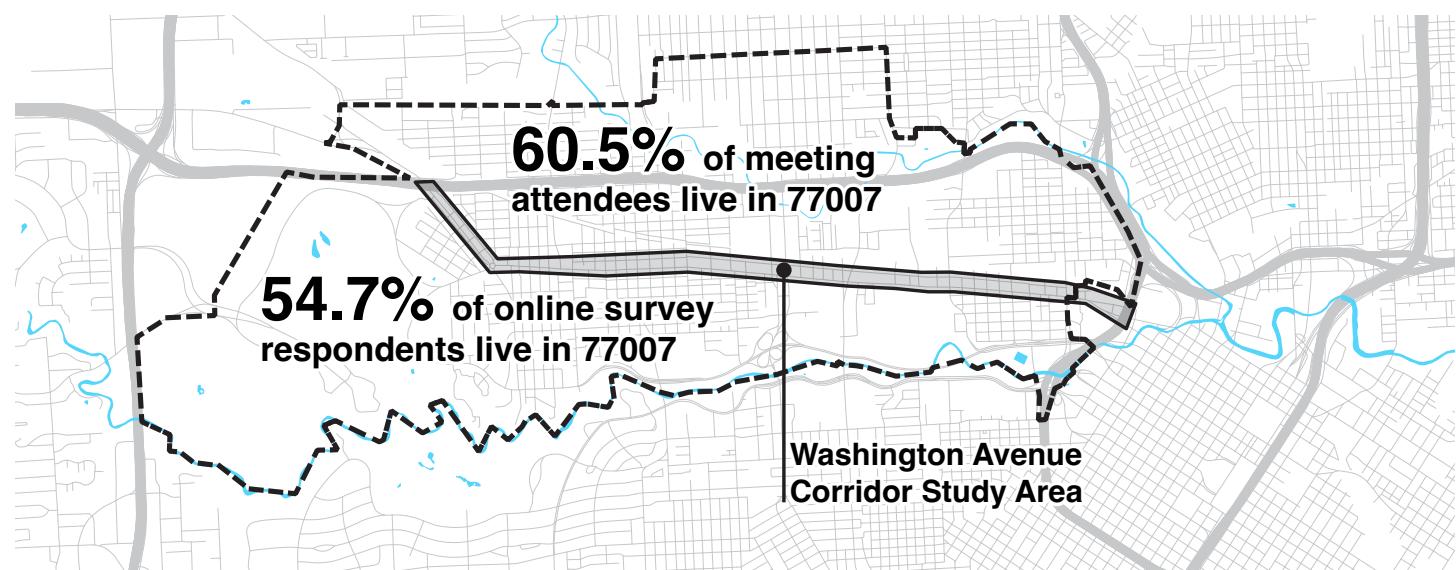
Building on the prior round of engagement and neighborhood focus group meeting, this round of engagement was advertised through the press, through community organizations and civic clubs, and through the steering committee members. Those who live, work, and visit the Washington Corridor were engaged through many methods. Flyers were dropped off at local schools, and Houston Matters, Houston Public Media, and the Houston Landing covered the alternatives engagement.

The design alternatives engagement period included an in-person and a virtual meeting, in addition to attending the SN22 meeting in February 2025 to promote the upcoming meetings. Over 100 people attended the alternatives meetings, and over 200 people completed the survey. During this engagement period, there were over 1000 visits to the project website.



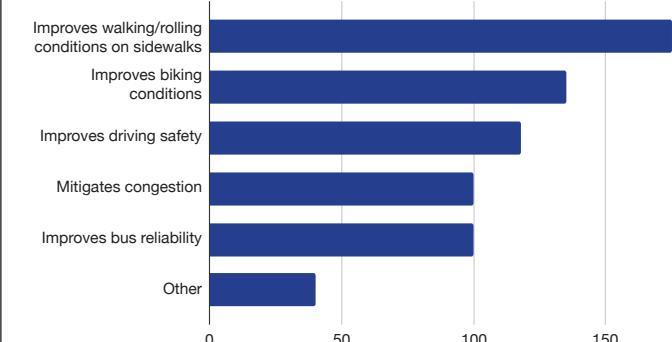
We also reached people on the project website, and we have seen a large amount of traffic during this last engagement period. The red shows unique visitors, whereas purple includes repeat visitors – showing that people are coming back to engage with the material further and interact with the survey.

The majority of public meeting attendees and survey participants live in the Washington Avenue Corridor area.



One of the main questions asked outside of the different alternatives was about which factors were most important to people when choosing their top alternative. Improving walking, rolling, and biking conditions were the most important to people across the board.

Which of these factors was important to you when choosing your top alternative? (check all that apply)

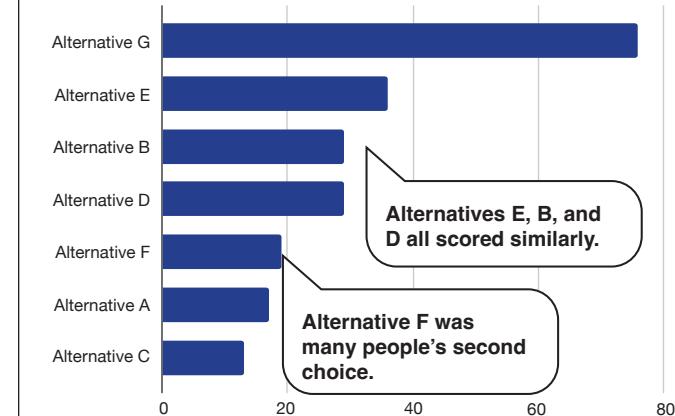


After choosing their top factors, people ranked them from 1-7, allowing the project team to understand not only people's top choice, but also their order of preference for the other choices.

Out of all seven alternatives, including those that were not modeled, participants chose center-running transit 'G' as their top choice.

Considering the strengths and weaknesses of each alternative, please rank the alternatives:

Count of Respondent's First Ranked Alternative



In both methods of analyzing the results, wide sidewalks and center-running transit are the most popular options, which align with people's desire for more mobility options along the corridor.

Alternative G also rose to the top in the ranked-choice averages, and Alternatives D and F were ranked highly as well.

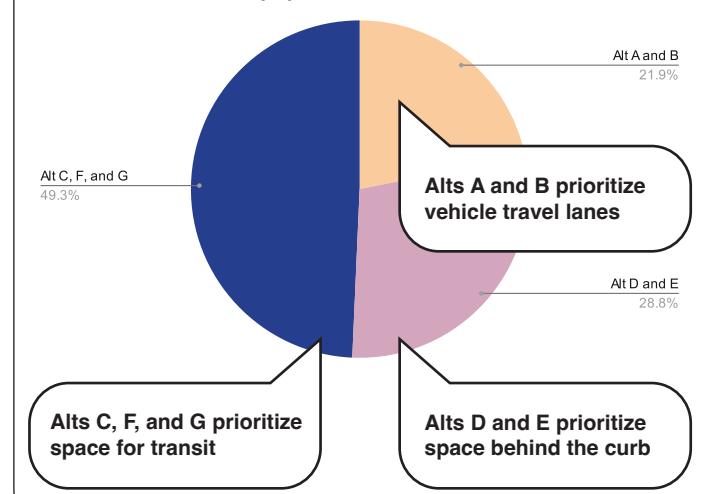
Considering the strengths and weaknesses of each alternative, please rank the alternatives:

Rank	Alternative Design Options	Ranked Choice Averages
#1	Alternative G: One vehicular lane plus center-running transit through I-10	#3.32 average
#2	Alternative D: One vehicular lane with a right turn lane and wide sidewalks	#3.43 average
#3	Alternative F: One vehicular lane plus center-running transit through Heights Blvd	#3.48 average
#4	Alternative C: One vehicular lane and one bus-only lane with right turns	#3.78 average
#5	Alternative E: One vehicular lane and off-street bike lanes on Washington	#3.8 average
#6	Alternative B: Two vehicular lanes each direction with a median and turn lanes	#4.65 average
#7	Alternative A: Two wide vehicular lanes each direction with turn lanes	#5.55 average

While the seven alternatives are unique in their specific design recommendations, the allocation of types of spatial use can be clustered into three groups. These groupings further distill the results of the alternatives engagement based on spatial priority. Alternatives A and B prioritize space for vehicle travel lanes. Alternatives D and E prioritize space between the curb and the property line, and Alternatives C, F, and G prioritize space in the right-of-way for transit.

Considering the strengths and weaknesses of each alternative, please rank the alternatives:

#1 Ranked Alternatives by Spatial Allocation



"Walkability and safety are most important to me since i live and work in this neighborhood"

- Employer on Washington Avenue

"Slowing down through traffic and improving the pedestrian realm will be beneficial for Washington Ave businesses."

- Resident along Washington Avenue

"Walking and biking along Washington is scary and very dangerous. There is no infrastructure to protect bikers and walkers. This could be a great walkable and bike-able neighborhood (esp being sandwiched between memorial park and buffalo bayou park). We got a taste of it during Covid... please bring it back!"

- Employer on Washington Avenue

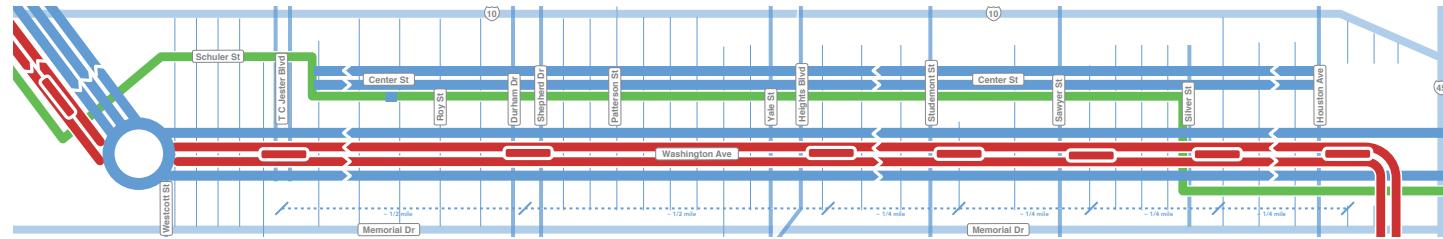
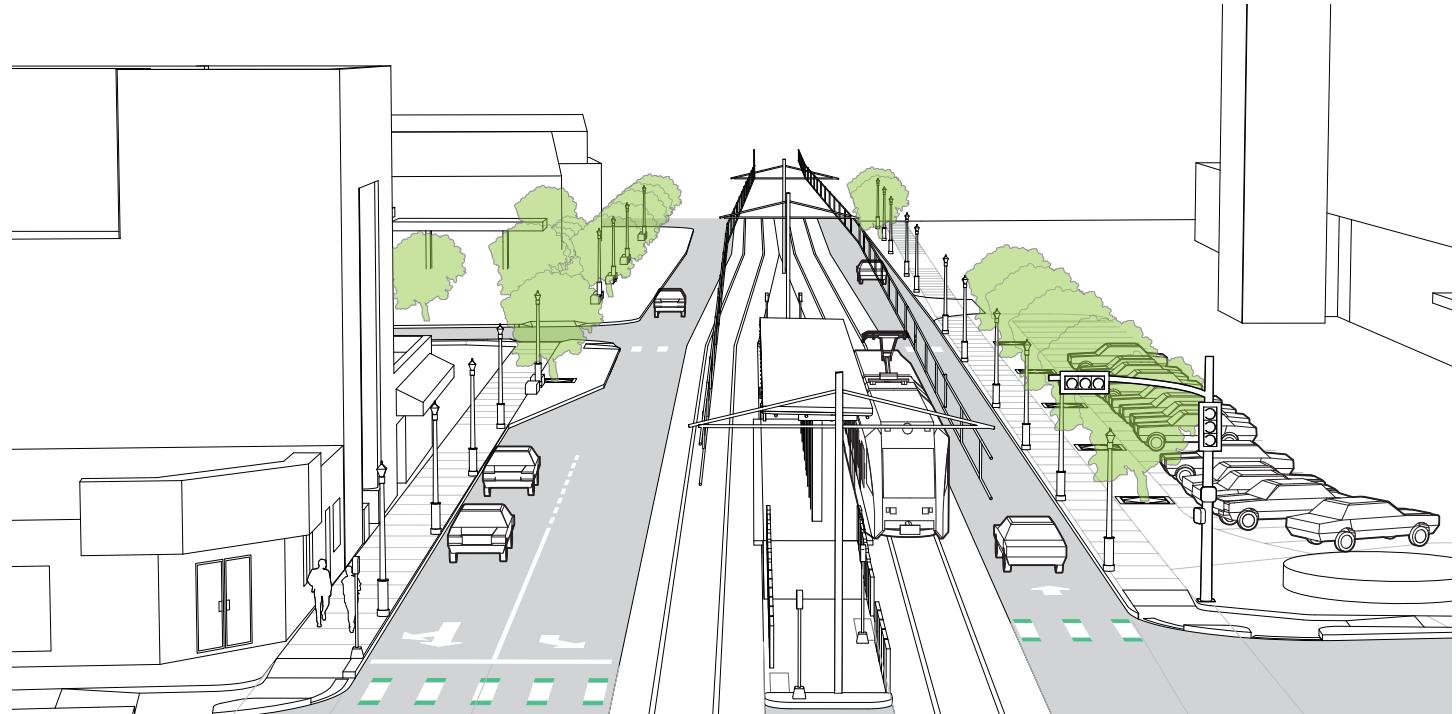
The recommendation for the Washington Avenue Corridor

Study includes two parts:

01 Community Preferred Vision:

One vehicular lane in each direction plus center-running transit (bus or rail) connecting to Northwest Transit Center

The Community Preferred Vision has one vehicular lane east of the roundabout with center-running light rail or bus rapid transit. These two modes of transportation have similar footprints and can be planned for as phased options or for final implementation. Northwest of the roundabout, there are two vehicle lanes southbound and one northbound with turn lanes and crosswalks at major intersections.



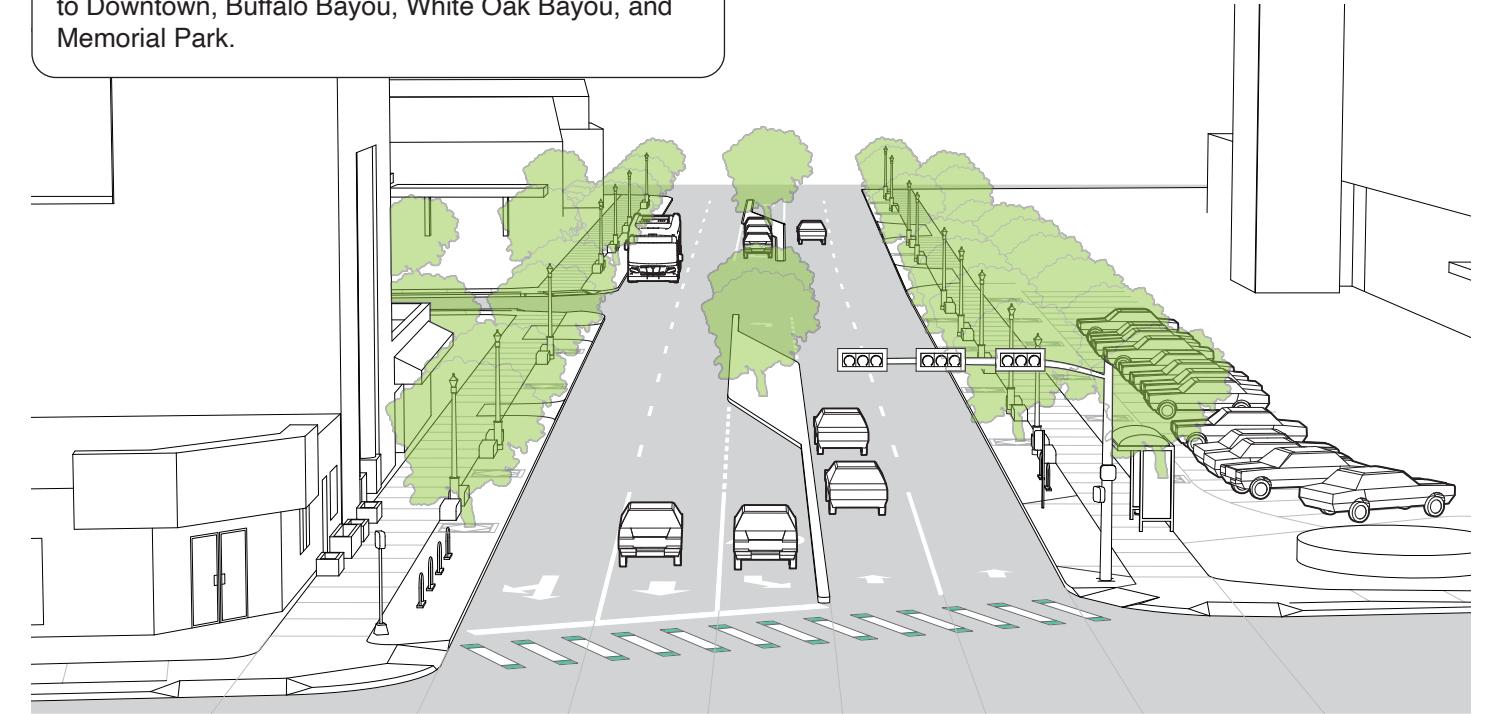
02 Baseline Constrained Alternative:

Two vehicular lanes in each direction with a median and turn lanes

The Baseline Constrained Alternative has vehicular lanes very similar to the present condition on Washington. It adds accessible sidewalks and street trees. It includes turn lanes at major intersections and medians with trees elsewhere.

It also includes:

- Accessible sidewalks.
- Parking management with recommended structured parking.
- Frequent transit in mixed traffic.
- More and safer neighborhood bike connections with protected bike lanes on Center Street, Schuler Street, and in the Westcott median, providing connections to Downtown, Buffalo Bayou, White Oak Bayou, and Memorial Park.



These short term improvements require minimal resources and partnerships for implementation.

These improvements allow integration with ongoing efforts under consideration before moving into a full design phase.

01. Pedestrian Crossings

Many areas of Washington Avenue have distances between crossings much greater than the City of Houston's Infrastructure Design Manual specify. To enhance and improve safety, the following short-term improvements should be considered:

- Added signalized intersection at Center St and Durham Dr where traffic on Center St crosses four lanes without a signal.
- Added midblock crossings near METRO stops that are far from signalized intersections.
- Repainting and upgrading existing crossings at signalized intersections.



02. Wayfinding

Install signage that guides both pedestrians and drivers to better navigate the corridor and be more aware of their surroundings, encouraging a more welcoming and user-friendly environment for all users.

- Install visible signage at pedestrian crossings.
- Clearly mark and signalize bus stops.



03. Temporary landscape

Temporary furniture would enhance comfort for pedestrians and encourage outdoor seating for local restaurants and cafes, attracting more foot traffic.

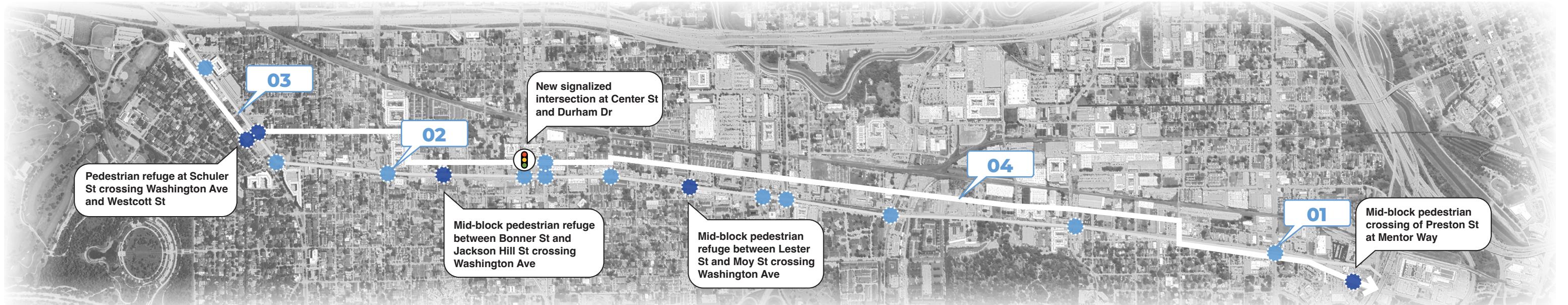
- Can be incorporated throughout the Corridor.
- Place planters with ornamental trees for added shade and planters with shrubs.
- Create gathering areas with small tables, seating and benches.



04. Temporary Bike infrastructure / traffic barriers

Designated bike infrastructure in car-free zones would support the safety of cyclists on the street.

- On Washington Avenue, introduce concrete separators to create dedicated bike infrastructure between downtown and Silver St, and add signage.
- Paint sharrows on Center St from Detering St to Silver St and on Schuler St and add signage
- Install bike racks in key locations.



Upgraded pedestrian conditions at current intersection

Upgraded pedestrian conditions at mid-block location

New signalized intersection

Temporary bike infrastructure/traffic barriers

Implementation costs for each long term and short term recommendation were calculated using 2025 costs.

Estimated Costs - Long Term Improvements

The estimated costs for both options include updated drainage, buried utilities, and a full street reconstruction with all of the included recommendations within the chosen option. The cost estimation does not include property acquisition. The estimated costs are preliminary and subject to change. They are based on 2025 pricing and the preliminary designs of the projects, both of which may change due to internal and/or external factors.

Community Preferred Vision

The implementation of the Community Preferred Vision is a full reconstruction of the street within the public right-of-way including subsurface elements such as sewer and water and all surface elements. The estimated total cost for the reconstruction of Washington Avenue and Westcott Street between downtown and I-10 include mobilization, demolition of existing pavement, preparing of right of way, and excavation, the proposed pavement, subgrade, curb and back-of-curb, traffic signals, water line and storm sewer improvements, underground electrical, and street lighting in addition to all temporary facilities required for construction. It also includes all softscape and hardscape elements for the landscaping and pedestrian realm: tree zone and suspended pavement, pedestrian lighting, irrigation, trees, shrub, and planting soil. The estimation does not include contingency or right-of-way acquisition and is based on 2025 pricing.

Baseline Constrained Alternative

The implementation of the Baseline Constrained Alternative is a full reconstruction of the street within the public right-of-way including subsurface elements such as sewer and water and all surface elements. The total costs for the reconstruction of Washington Avenue and Westcott Street between downtown and I-10 include mobilization, demolition of existing pavement, preparing of right of way, excavation, the proposed pavement, subgrade, curb and back-of-curb, traffic signals, water line and storm sewer improvements, underground electrical, and street lighting in addition to all temporary facilities required for construction. It also includes all softscape and hardscape elements for the landscaping and pedestrian realm: tree zone and suspended pavement, pedestrian lighting, irrigation, trees, shrub, and planting soil. The estimation does not include contingency or right-of-way acquisition and is based on 2025 pricing.

Total Estimated Cost for Baseline Constrained Alternative: \$147,872,900

Center Street

The implementation of recommendations for Center Street can be independent of Washington Avenue and Westcott Street implementation. The total estimated cost for Center Street reconstruction include mobilization, demolition of existing pavement, preparing of right-of-way, excavation, the proposed pavement, subgrade, curb and back-of-curb, traffic signals, water line and storm sewer improvements, underground electrical, and street lighting in addition to all temporary facilities required for construction. It also includes all softscape and hardscape elements for the landscaping and pedestrian realm: tree zone and suspended pavement, pedestrian lighting, irrigation, trees, shrub, and planting soil. The estimation does not include contingency or right-of-way acquisition and is based on 2025 pricing. As shown in the drawing below, the cost estimation for Center Street only includes the portions of the bike infrastructure and street reconstruction on Center Street itself, not the complementary infrastructure on Silver St, Detering St, or Schuler St.

Total Estimated Cost for Center Street: \$39,035,800

Estimated Costs - Short Term Improvements

These short-term improvements are intended to enhance both the pedestrian and vehicular experience and act as quick wins that demonstrate commitment to the project's goals. They represent measures that can be implemented early in the process with minimal investment, supporting ongoing efforts.

The cost estimates below are preliminary and may change depending on market conditions and additional design development required to determine accurate values.

Pedestrian Crossings

Three different pedestrian crossing scenarios were analyzed, with estimated costs summarized as follows:

1. Upgrade of Existing Crossing: Includes restriping of crosswalks and reconstruction of ramps.

Total estimated cost per intersection: \$13,200

2. Mid-Block Crossing: Includes crosswalk striping, construction of median curbs, soil preparation, installation of shade trees, and ramps.

Total estimated cost per crossing: \$23,575

3. New Pedestrian Crossing: Includes installation of a pedestrian hybrid beacon, crosswalk striping, and ramps.

Total estimated cost per crossing: \$163,200

Temporary landscape

To implement landscaping in strategic locations, costs have been estimated on a per-unit basis, as well as an overall cost per **½ mile along both sides of the corridor**.

Each unit includes two planters with shrubs, perennials, and an ornamental tree, along with one bench.

Total estimated cost per unit: \$5,460

Total estimated cost ½ mile: \$82,368

Temporary bike infrastructure

The following cost estimate includes bike infrastructure from Silver Street to Downtown, including parking spots with plastic pylons and strategically located bike racks.

Total estimated cost - barriers (Silver St to Downtown): \$42,000

Total estimated cost - bike racks: \$5,500

Wayfinding

The wayfinding cost estimate is based on approximately **½ mile along both sides of the corridor**. Actual costs may vary depending on the location of the signage, as some blocks may require a higher concentration of signs while others may need only minimal installation. Signage installations must be coordinated with METRO and ensure compatibility with real-time information systems for any additional signage.

Total estimated cost per 1/2 mile: \$7,575

