



CITY OF CLUTE
LIVABLE CENTERS

Final Planning Report

8-1-2023



Houston-Galveston
Area Council



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INTRODUCTION

The Livable Centers Study for Clute, Texas is a comprehensive assessment and planning effort aimed at improving the livability, sustainability, and quality of life in the community. The study focuses on developing strategies and recommendations to create vibrant, pedestrian-friendly communities that offer a range of amenities, transportation options, and economic opportunities.

Livable Centers are Transportation and Land-use focused studies, but they are also places where people can live, work, and play with less reliance on their cars. They encourage a complementary mix of land uses that are designed to be walkable, connected, and accessible by multiple modes of transportation, including bus, bike, foot, or vehicle (multi-modal). Established in 2008, the Program works with local communities to reimagine auto-focused infrastructure, policies, and programs to be more multi-modal friendly. They are an initiative by the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), a regional organization responsible for addressing various challenges and opportunities in the Houston-Galveston area. This study is a collaboration with H-GAC, the City of Clute, Stakeholders, community members and the consultant team to provide a plan for the community to re-imagine its central core.

In the case of Clute, this Livable Centers Study aims to address the unique needs and characteristics of the community. Clute, located in Brazoria County, within the larger Houston metropolitan area has distinctive challenges when compared to surrounding communities. The study addresses the enhancement of Clute's livability by focusing on factors such as mobility, accessibility, public spaces, economic development, and social interaction.

Through the study's comprehensive planning process, we engaged with community stakeholders, including residents, business owners, local officials, and organizations, to identify existing challenges and opportunities. The study team collected data, conducted surveys, and assessed the current conditions and needs in the community.

Based on this analysis, the team has developed recommendations and plans that are tailored to Clute's specific context and goals. These recommendations include improvements to transportation infrastructure, the creation of pedestrian-friendly public spaces and amenities, and initiatives to support placemaking.

By implementing the study's recommendations, Clute will become a place where people can easily walk, bike, and access essential services and amenities, fostering a sense of community, promoting healthy lifestyles, and supporting local businesses.

This Livable Centers Study will serve as a roadmap for Clute's future development, guiding decision-makers, and stakeholders in making informed choices that align with the community's vision and values, while providing a framework for creating a more vibrant and livable community, enhancing the overall quality of life for Clute's residents, and ensuring a sustainable and prosperous future.

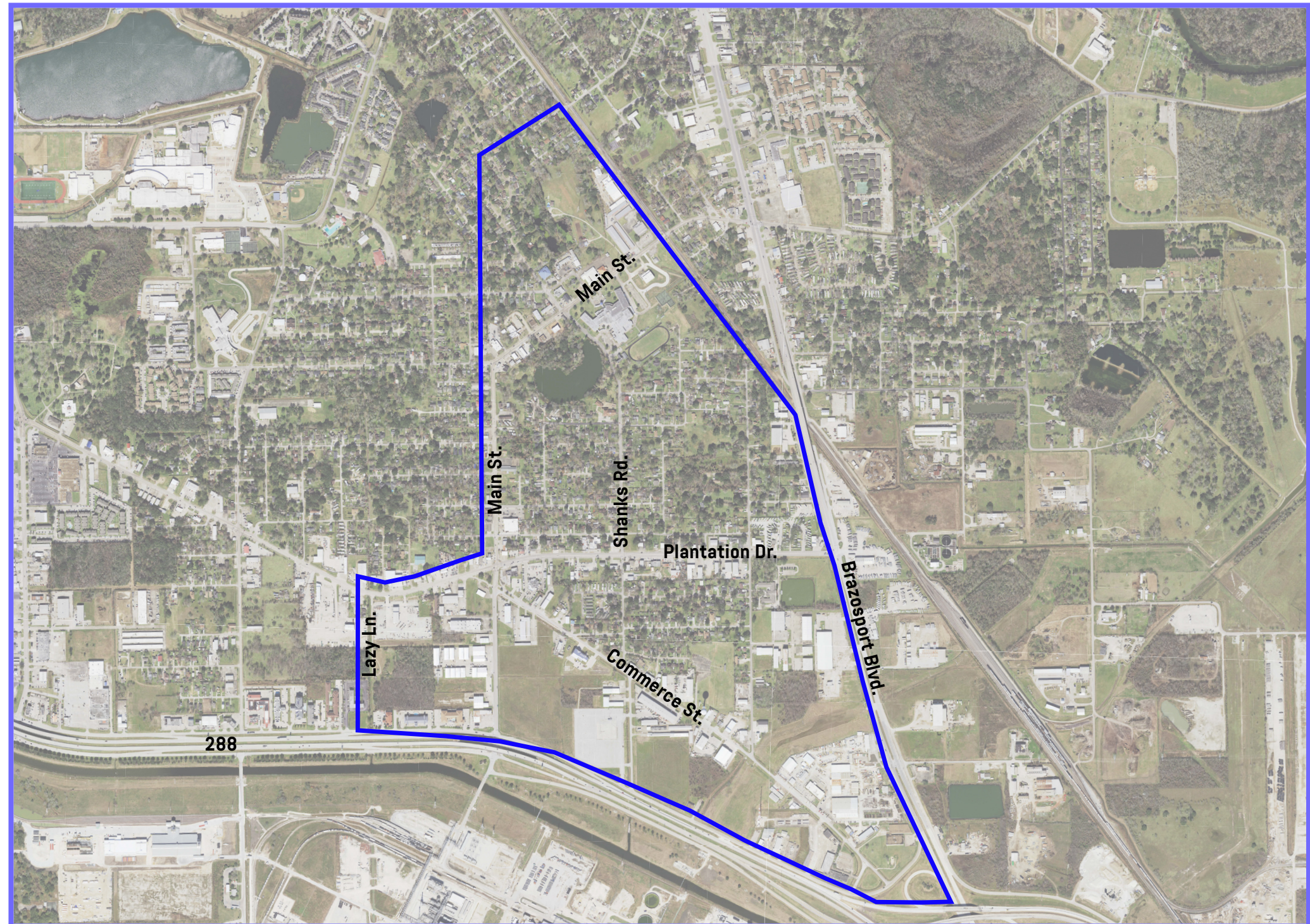


LIVABLE CENTERS STUDY AREA

The City of Clute was incorporated in 1952 and grew into a bedroom community of the petrochemical industrial complex centering on the Stratton Ridge salt dome. The study area is located in Brazoria County south of Lake Jackson and north of the City of Freeport. The area study area is bounded by TX-288/332 to the South, Lazy Lane and Main Street to the West, Railroad Drive/ Old Angleton Road to the North-Northwest, and Brazosport Boulevard to the East.

Clute has become two different communities in the last decade. As the City has matured, two moderately sized Master Planned Communities have been developed that have increased the number of homes and total population. These new developments stand in stark contrast to the older part of town located south of Brazoswood Drive. The “new” Clute sees home values between \$300,000 to more than \$1 Million. The majority of “old” Clute is original housing stock from the 1950’s with values in the mid-\$100,000’s; the majority of those homes are rentals and in need of renovation. The City adopted Zoning in the 1970’s but lacks a central core to unify the “two Clutes”.

The City is committed to developing a Central Core that will serve as a gathering place for the community as a whole. It understands that in order to be sustainable this area must provide an environment that will provide decent, safe, and affordable housing in close proximity to transit stops, employment, educational and recreational opportunities connected not only by streets but also by sidewalks and dedicated pathways.



 Study Area Boundary

LIVABLE CENTERS STUDY GOALS

- 1. Create an Actionable Livable Centers Plan for the City of Clute**
- 2. Improve access to Multi-Modal Mobility in Clute**
- 3. Identify and provide solutions to give the Clute Study Area a sense of place**



CITY OF CLUTE
LIVABLE CENTERS



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Needs Assessment is one of the most important parts of the Livable Centers process. It allows the project team to have an in-depth understanding of Clute in regards to the challenges and issues faced by residents in terms of walkability, connectivity, and placemaking.

The team conducted several trips to Clute to investigate existing conditions. On these trips, meetings were held with various members of city staff to get a better understanding of areas where Clute is doing well and where they can do better. This included documenting existing conditions of various street types through photographs, measuring lane widths, cataloguing amenities, etc.

Clute has a rich and complicated history. Through discussions with the mayor, city staff and other local individuals, the team was able to gain a better understanding of that history. A surprising piece of that history is this: Clute never had a historic town center. Throughout its existence, there have been places where people gathered, but nothing substantial or enduring. So, during this Needs Assessment, the team was on the lookout for areas that, through placemaking efforts, could become that central heart of Clute.

The team also wanted to gain an understanding of the character and “feel” of the community. This was accomplished through visits with local businesses, meetings with stakeholders, and a lot of traversing around the city.

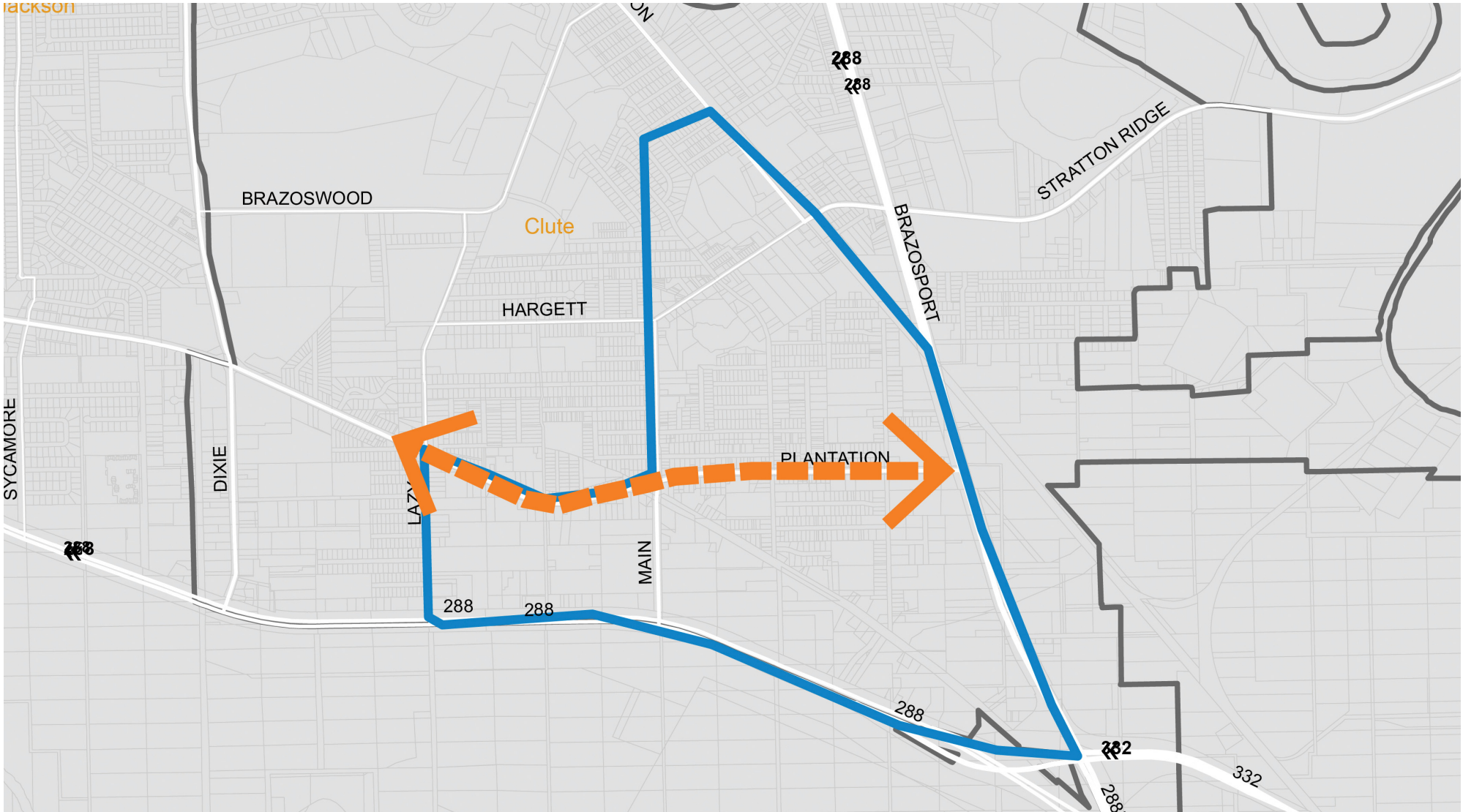
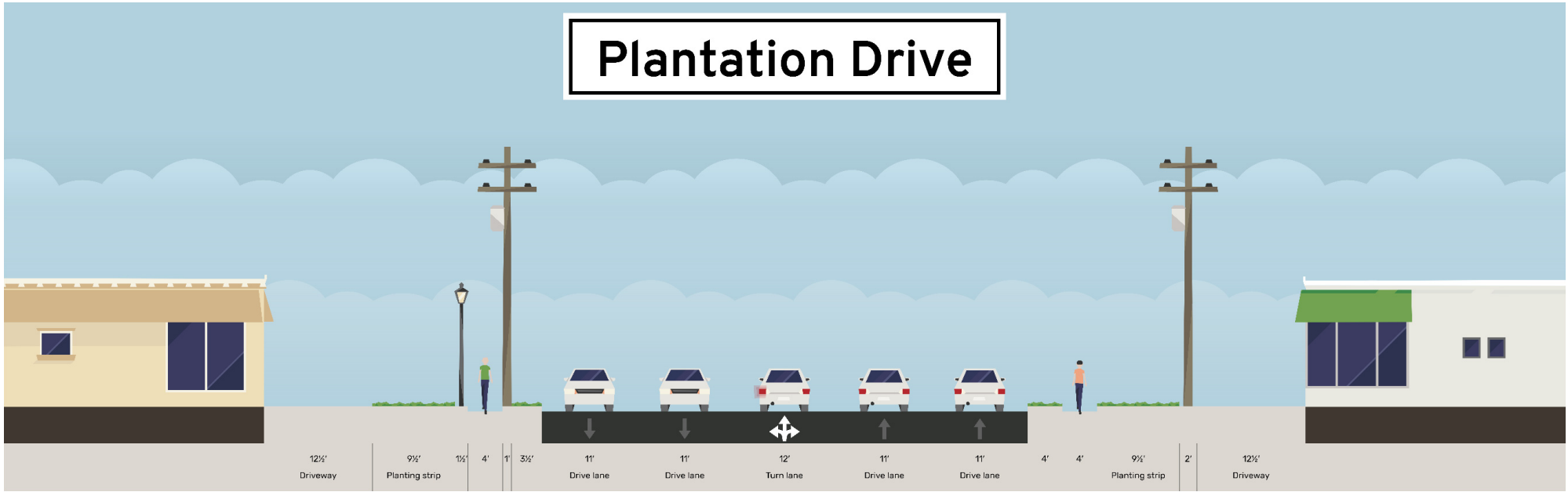
Data from the recent census was studied, providing information on the city make-up in terms of race, ethnicity, income levels, etc. This information led to insight that helped the team formulate planning strategies that could benefit all members of the community.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Main East - West Thoroughfare through the Study Area
- Little to no street trees
- Overhead power lines create unappealing streetscape
- No bike lanes, protected or otherwise
- Other sections of Plantation Drive do not have a center turn lane, this needs to be consistent throughout
- Existing network of sidewalks that can be improved upon
- Some street lighting, more is needed
- Existing ROW may be wider than needed
- No Onstreet Parking
- Possible reduction in travel lanes could present opportunity for multi-modal options
- Most existing buildings are setback further than than would be preferred, possible reduction in setback requirements from city code perspective.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT - CONNECTIVITY

Plantation Drive



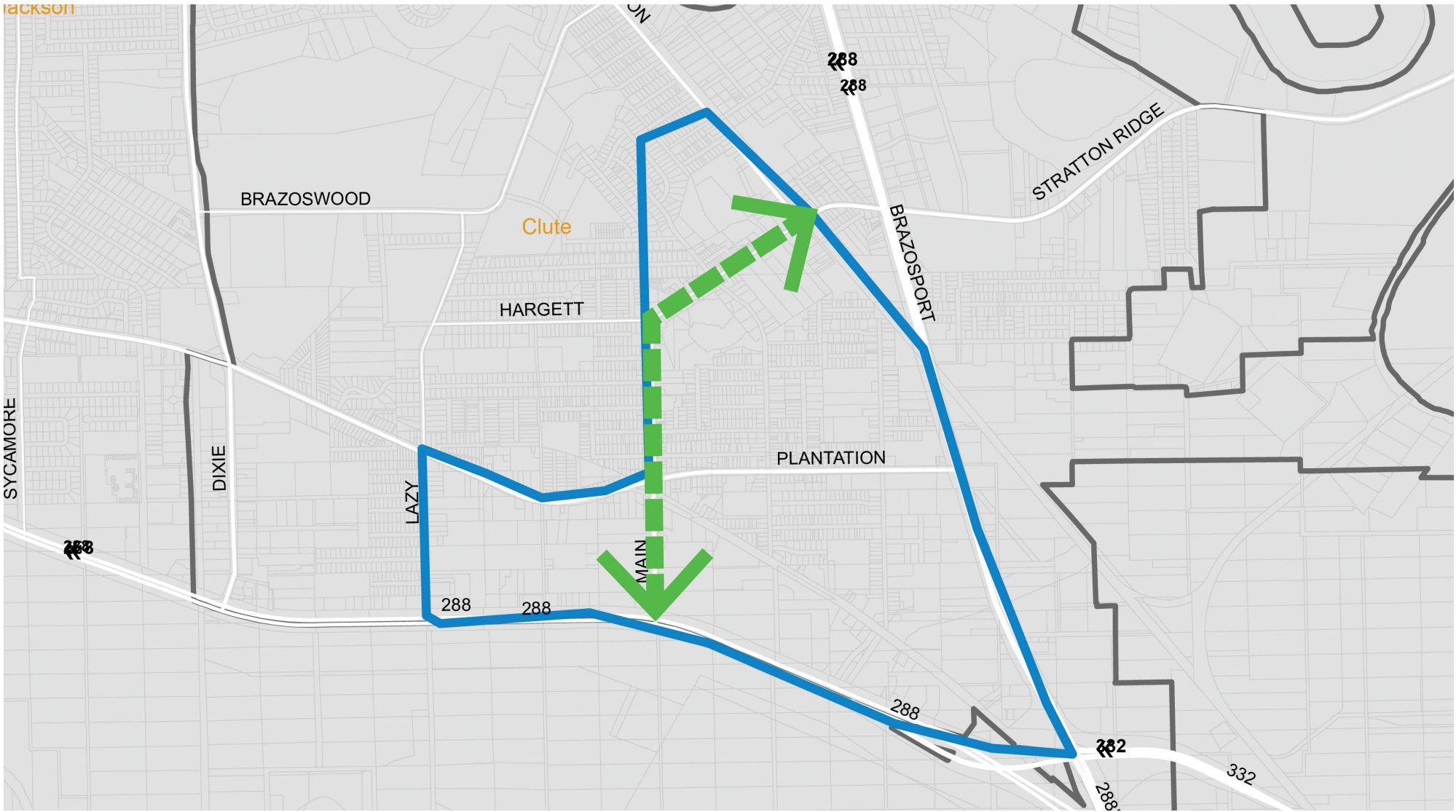
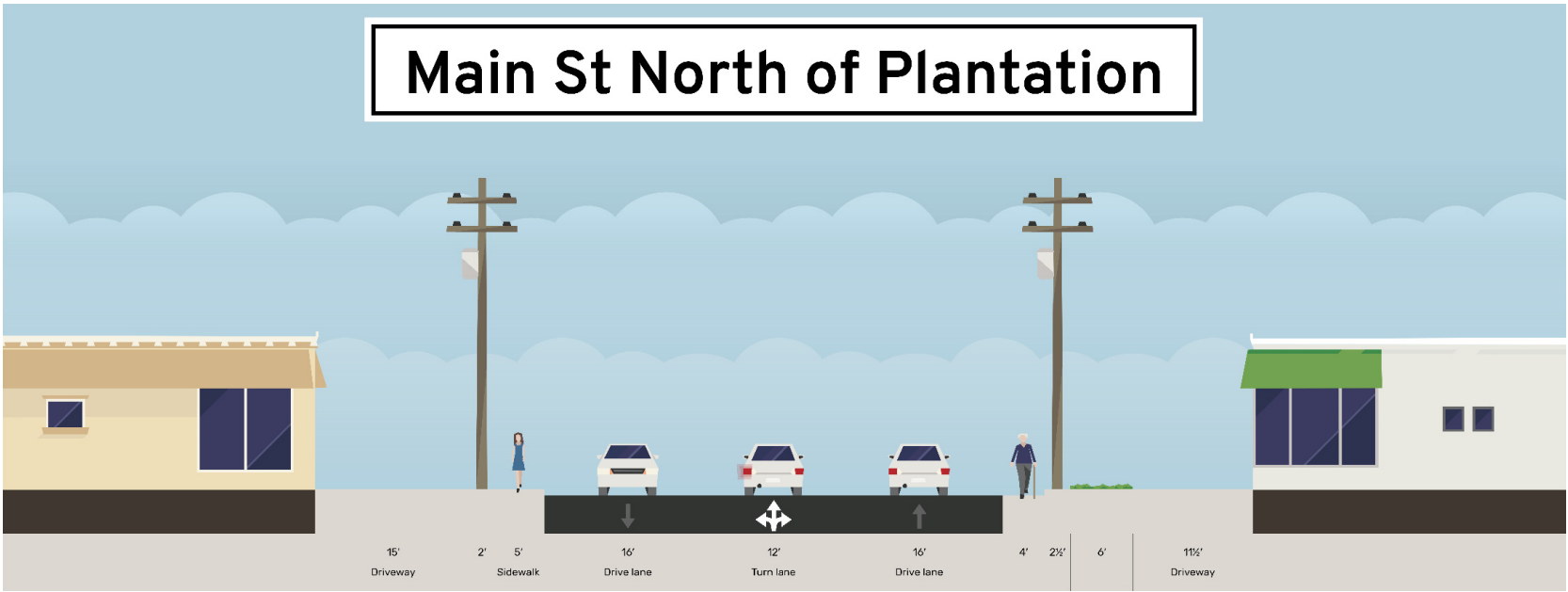
KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Main North - South Thoroughfare through the Study Area
- Some trees but little to no street trees
- Overhead power lines create unappealing streetscape
- No bike lanes, protected or otherwise
- 16' wide travel lanes are much wider than needed, extra space can be used for added multi-modal options
- Existing network of sidewalks that can be improved upon, It currently exists next to the curb which is unappealing for walkability
- Little to no street lighting
- No onstreet parking
- Most existing buildings are setback further than than would be preferred, possible reduction in setback requirements from city code perspective.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT - CONNECTIVITY

Main Street

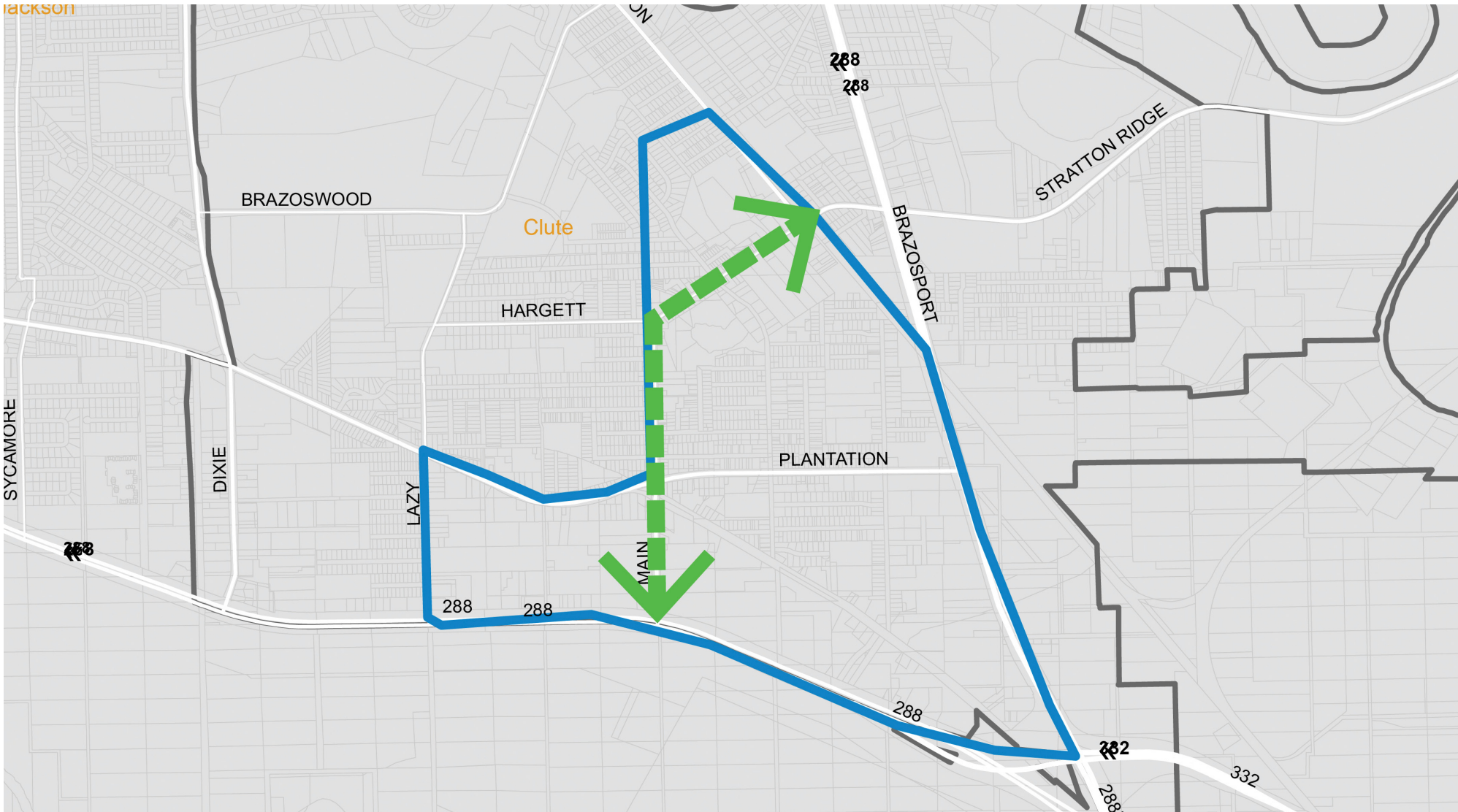
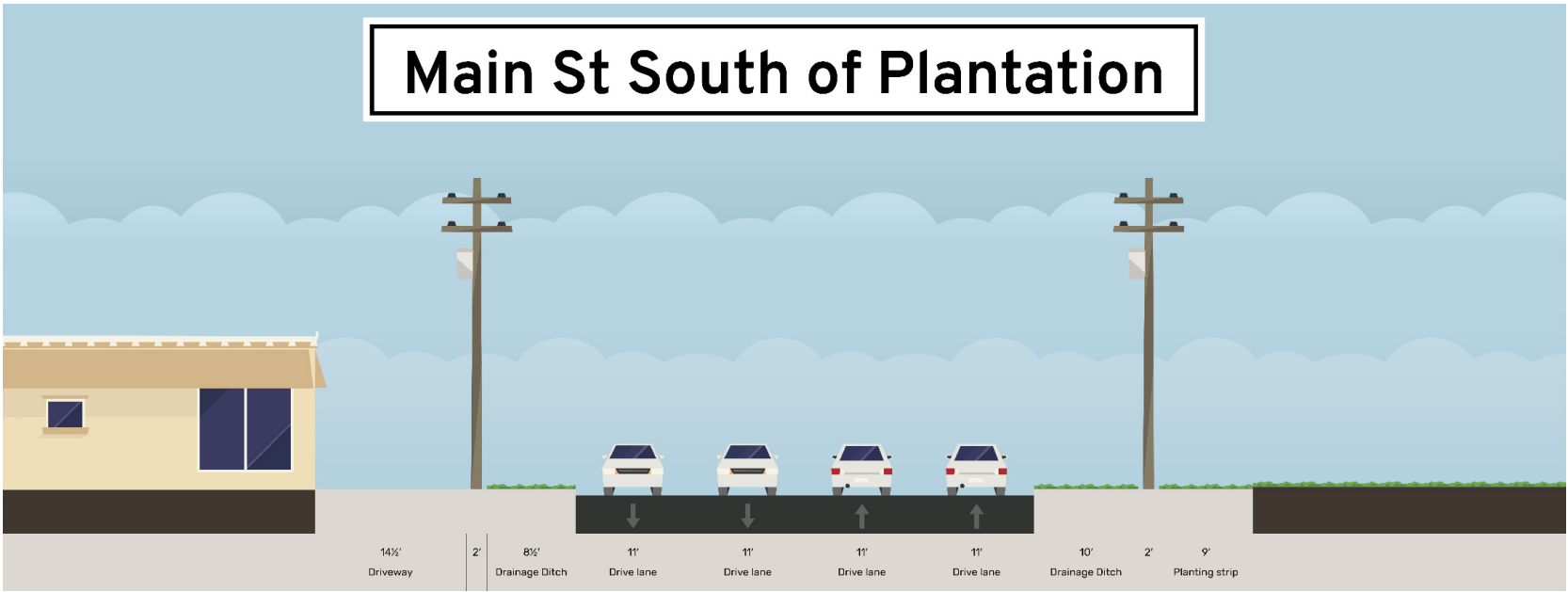


KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Main North - South Thoroughfare through the Study Area
- No street trees
- Overhead power lines create unappealing streetscape
- No bike lanes, protected or otherwise
- Lack of center turn lane creates unsafe traffic flow
- Possible conversion to 3 lane to match Main St. to the north, any remaining space can be used for multi-modal options.
- No existing sidewalks
- No street lighting
- No onstreet parking
- Any exposed bar ditches should be converted to curb and gutter and drainage taken underground
- Most existing buildings are setback further than than would be preferred, possible reduction in setback requirements from city code perspective

NEEDS ASSESSMENT - CONNECTIVITY

Main Street



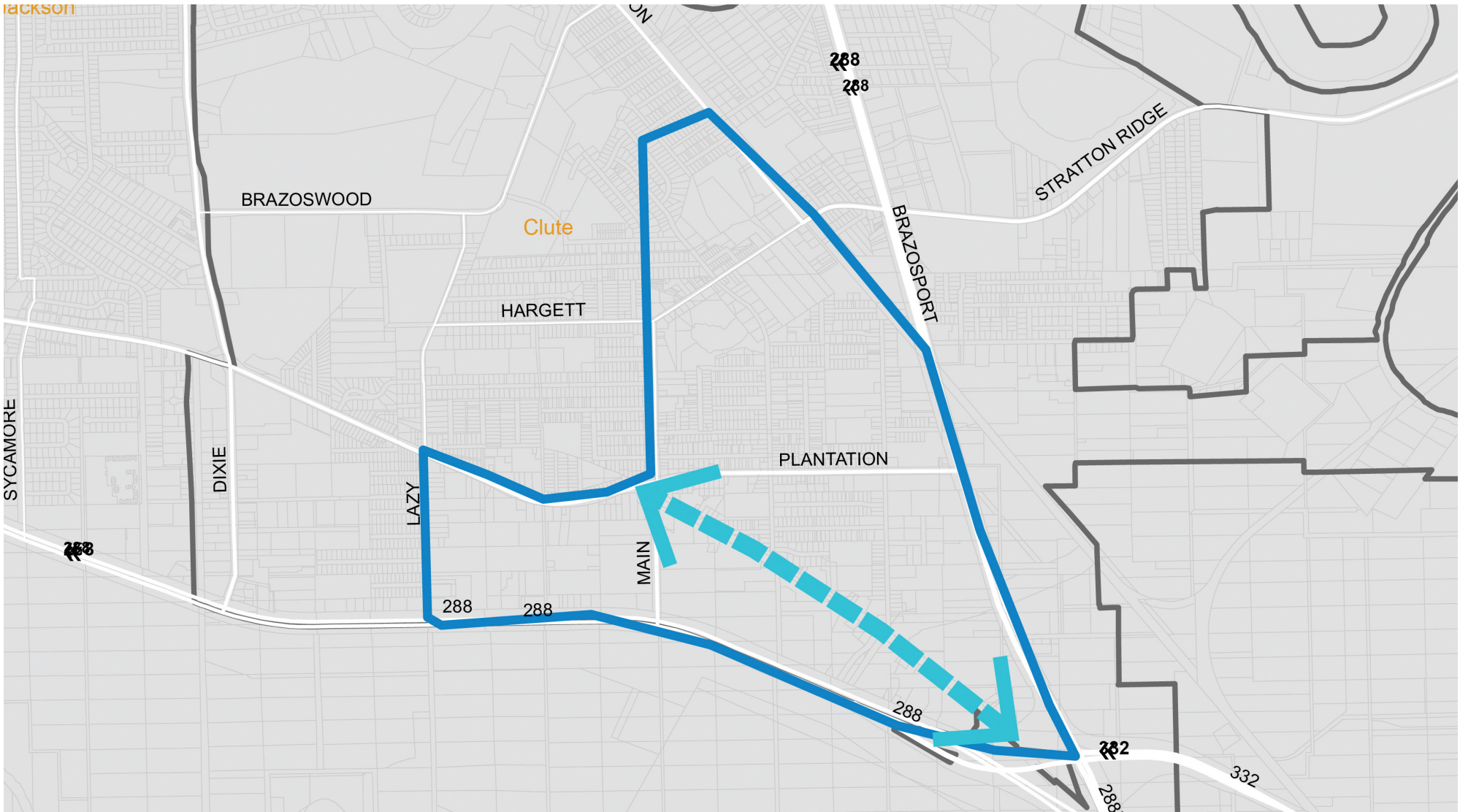
KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Many local employers are located here
- No street trees
- Overhead power lines create unappealing streetscape
- No bike lanes, protected or otherwise
- 16' wide travel lanes are much wider than needed, extra space can be used for added multi-modal options
- No existing transit stops
- Some existing sidewalks on one side of street
- No street lighting
- No onstreet parking
- Any exposed bar ditches should be converted to curb and gutter and drainage taken underground
- Most existing buildings are setback further than than would be preferred, possible reduction in setback requirements from city code perspective



NEEDS ASSESSMENT - CONNECTIVITY

Commerce Avenue

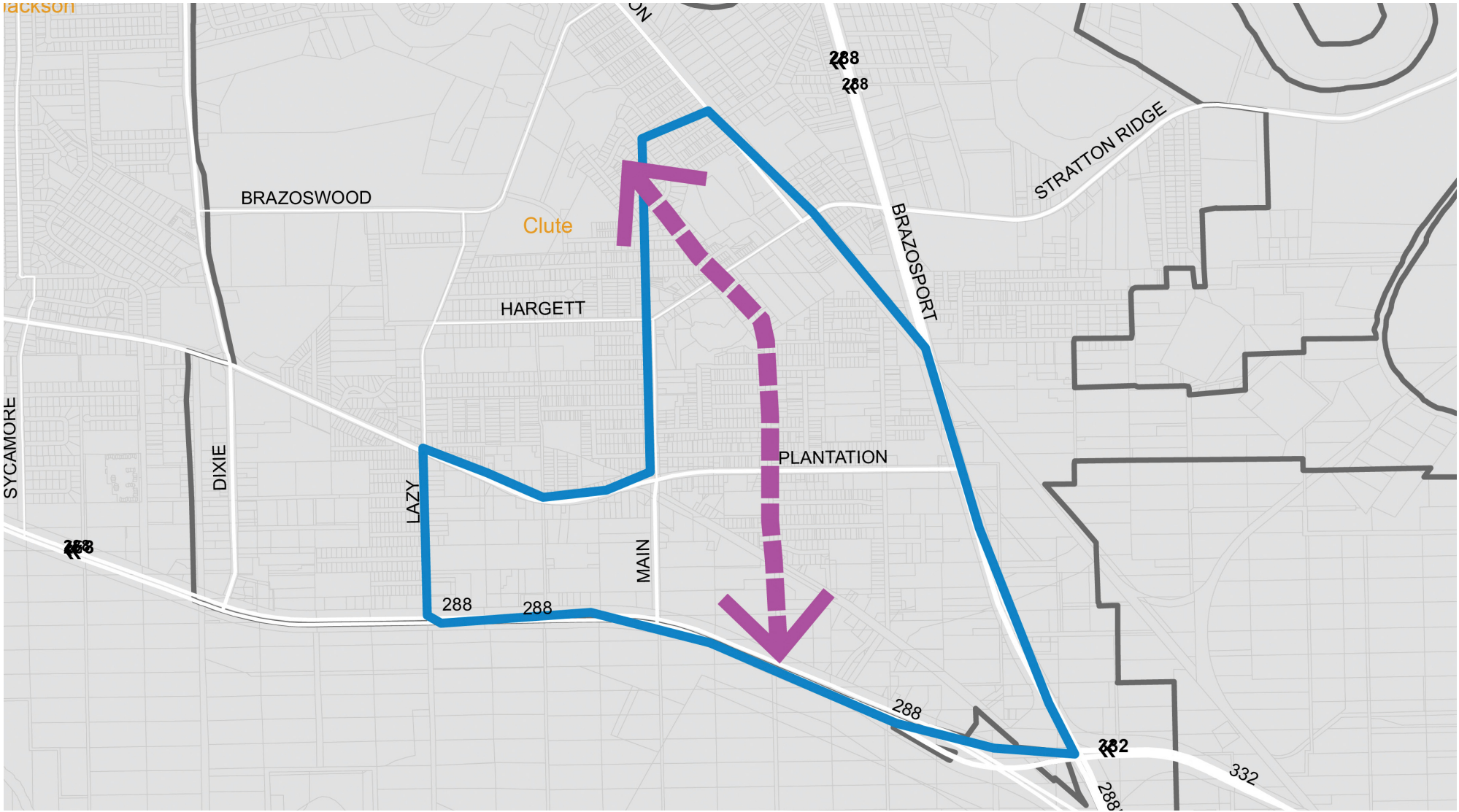


KEY TAKEAWAYS:

NEEDS ASSESSMENT - CONNECTIVITY

Shanks Road

- Could function as a north - south multi-modal route, that is off of the major thoroughfares
- No Onstreet Parking, could be used to protect bikeways
- Decent amount of tree cover, any existing trees should be preserved, additional trees should be added
- Some Overhead power lines
- No bike lanes, protected or otherwise
- Walkability potential is very high
- 16' wide travel lanes are much wider than needed, extra space can be used for added multi-modal options
- Some existing sidewalks on one side of street, location next to curb is not ideal
- No street lighting



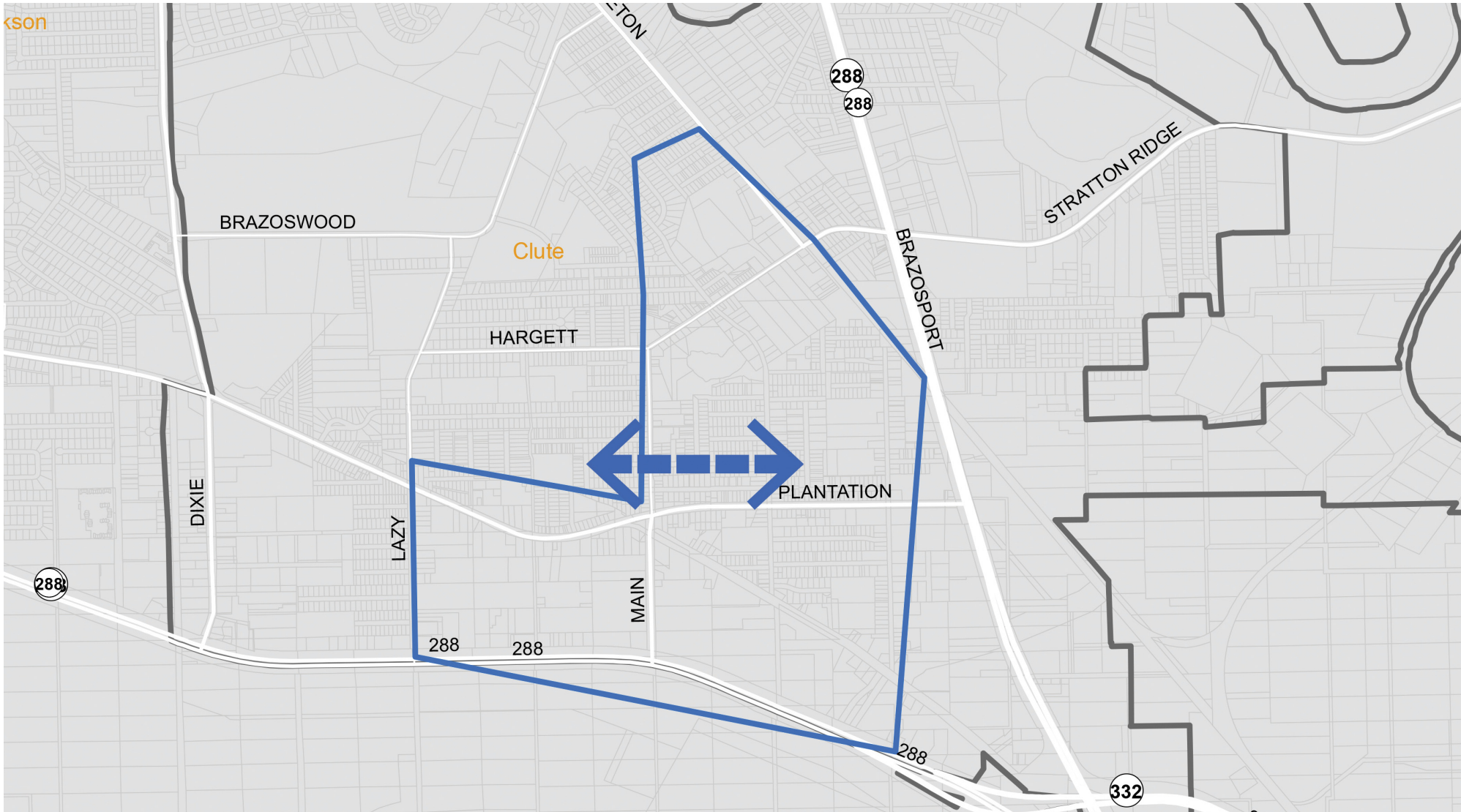
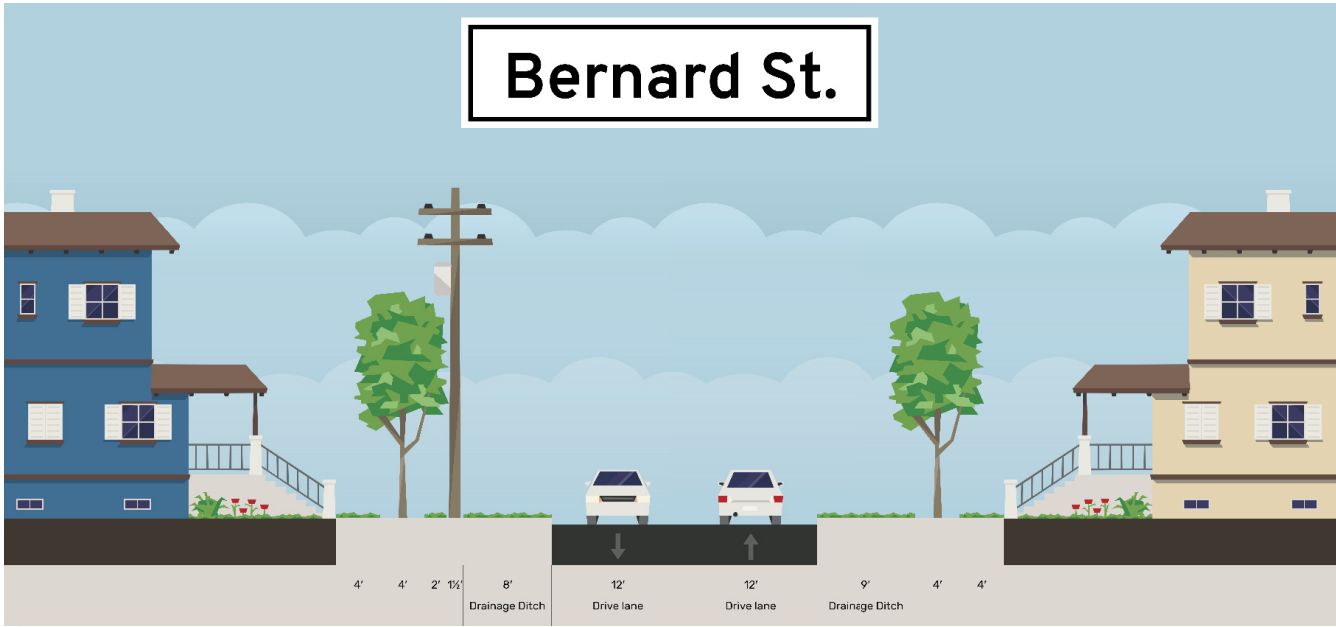
KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Could function as a one of the east - west multi-modal route, that is off of the major thoroughfares
- No Onstreet Parking, could be used to protect bikeways
- Some existing tree cover, though it is pulled back from the street mostly on private property
- Some Overhead power lines
- No bike lanes, protected or otherwise
- 12' wide travel lanes are much wider than needed, extra space can be used for added multi-modal options
- No existing sidewalks
- No street lighting
- Any exposed bar ditches should be converted to curb and gutter and drainage taken underground, land could then be used for multi-modal options



NEEDS ASSESSMENT - CONNECTIVITY

Bernard Street



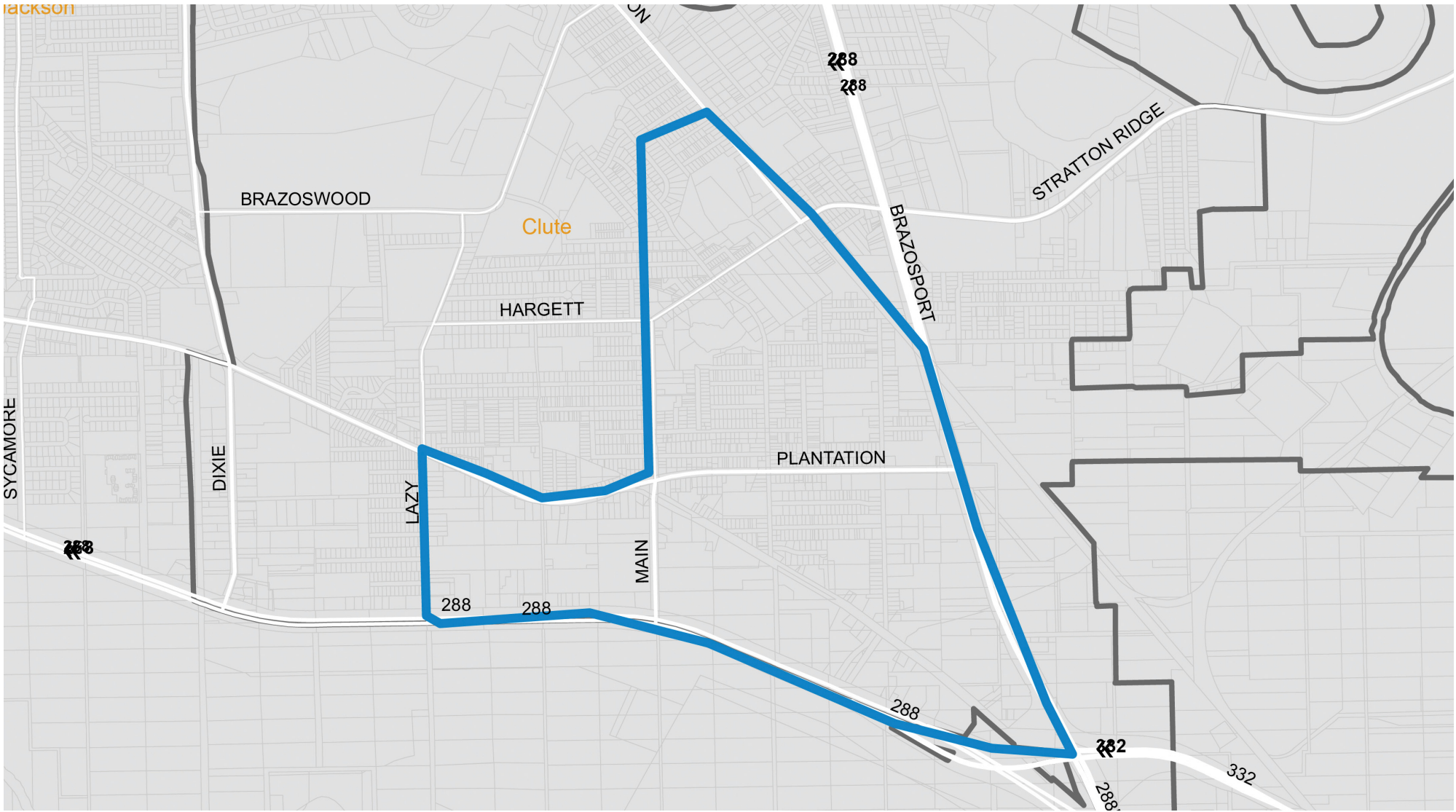
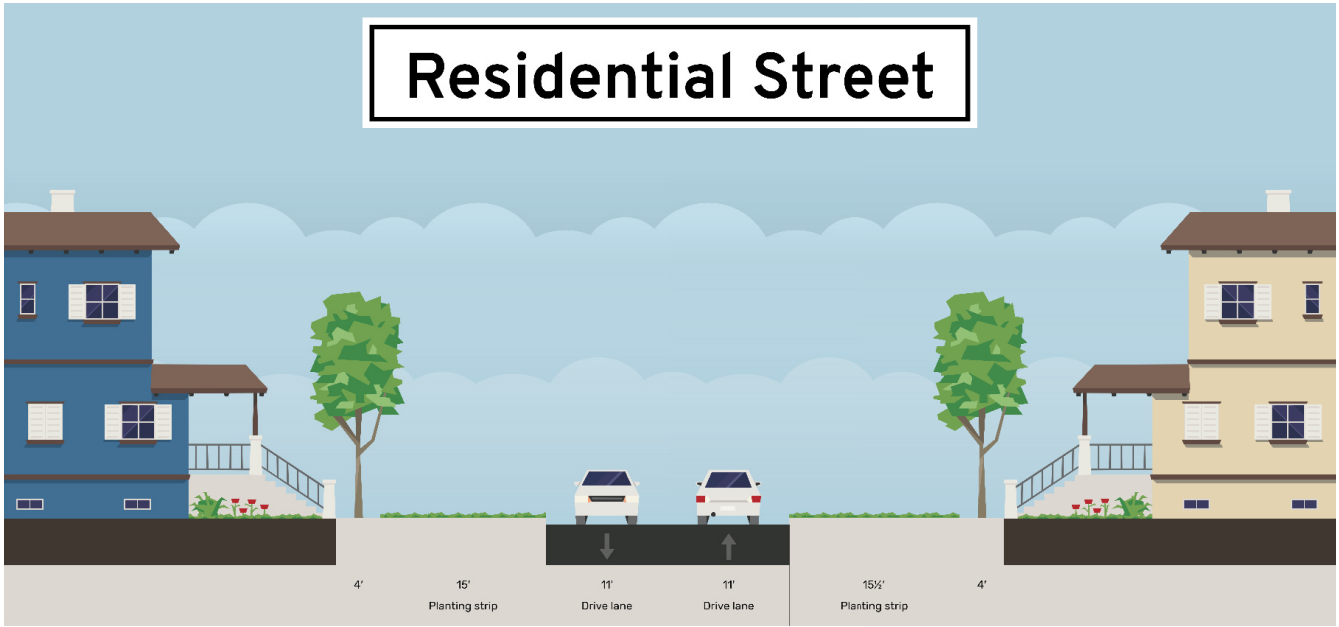
KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- No Onstreet Parking
- Some existing tree cover, though it is pulled back from the street mostly on private property
- Some Overhead power lines
- No bike lanes, protected or otherwise
- No existing sidewalks
- No street lighting
- Any exposed bar ditches should be converted to curb and gutter and drainage taken underground, land could then be used for multi-modal options



NEEDS ASSESSMENT - CONNECTIVITY

Typical Residential Street



As this page shows there are very many no outlet streets within and bordering the study area. Most of the streets are residential. They lack adequate turnarounds which can be detrimental services. Also no outlet streets do not promote connectivity since those streets become isolated from the other neighbors, they also detract form the sense of place / community. They also make navigating the study area very challenging for anyone that has not lived in the area for several years.

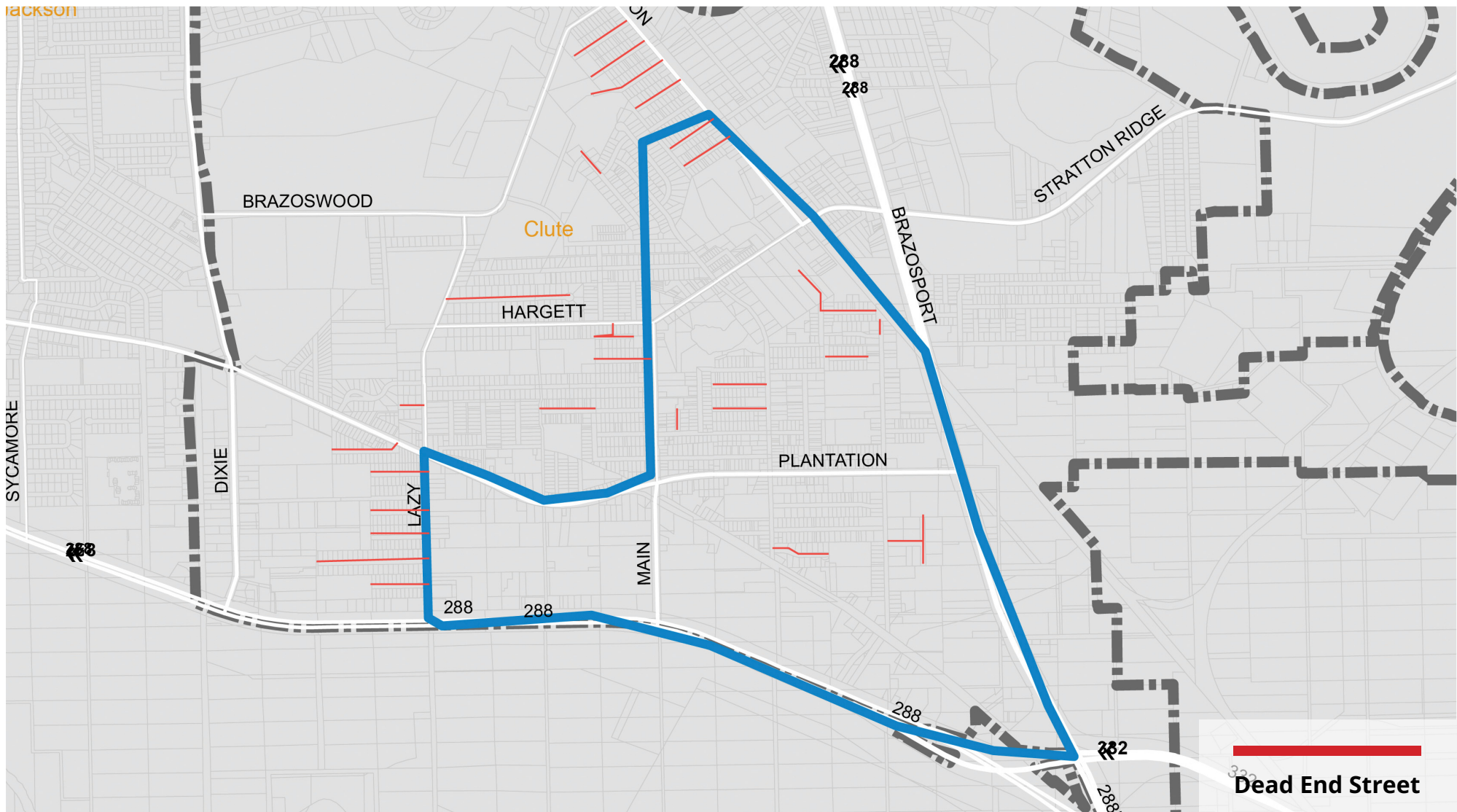
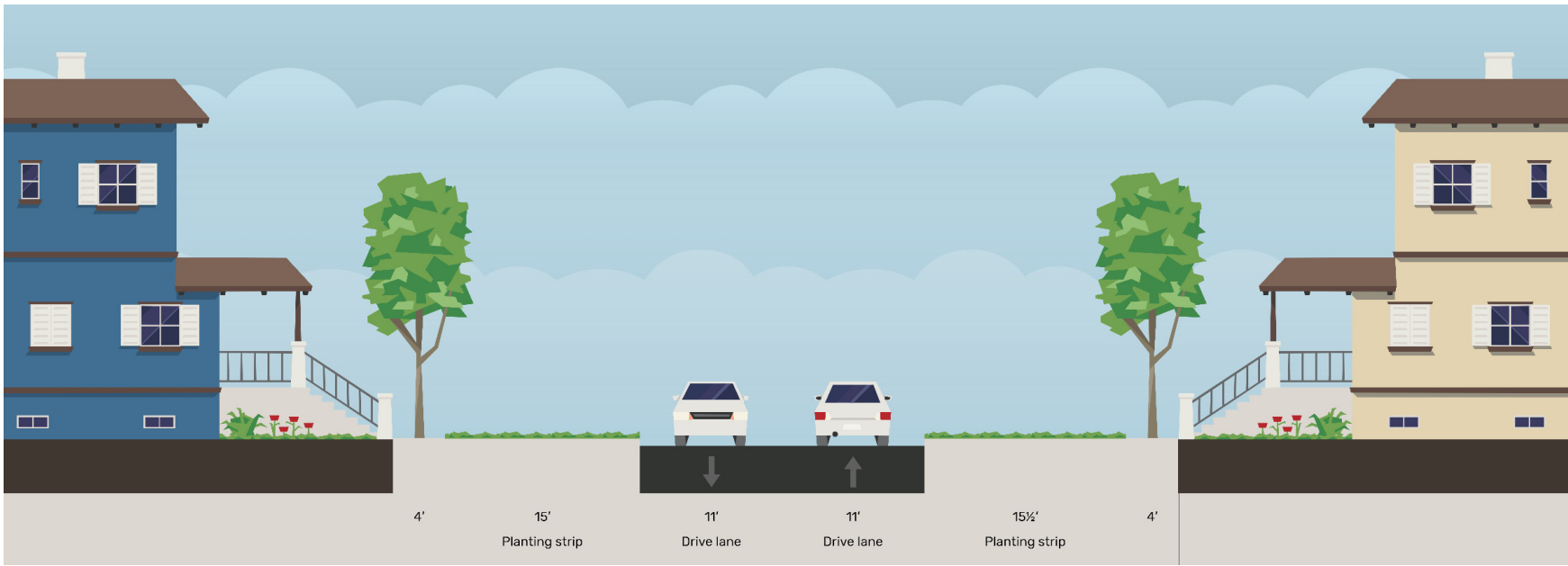
Remedying these no outlet streets from a vehicular standpoint is challenging since there are existing structures at the terminus, though there may be ways to create pedestrian easements so that residents are connected to their neighbors.

Most contain bar ditches for drainage, these could be taken underground to allow for sidewalks and on street parking.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT - CONNECTIVITY

No Outlet Streets

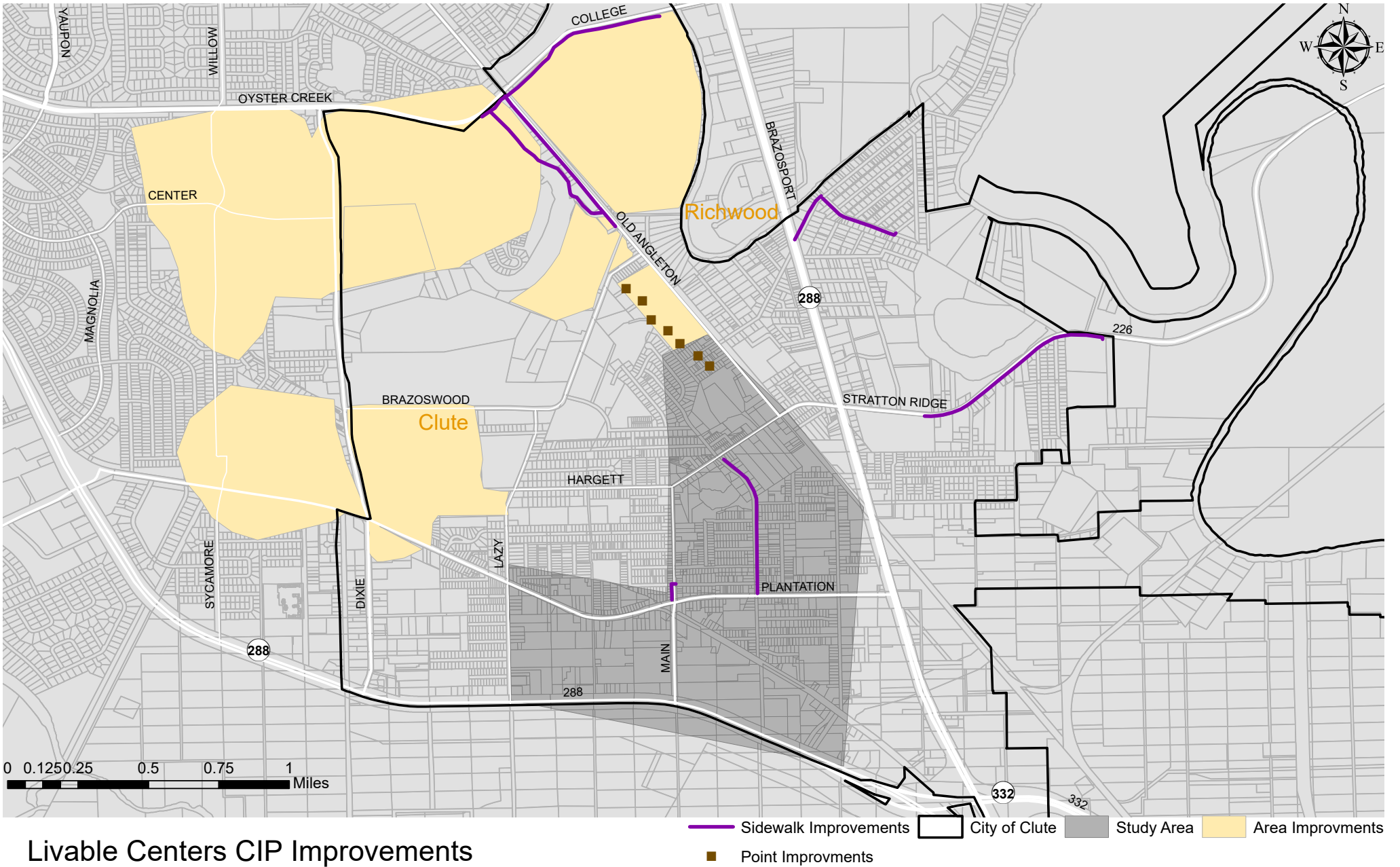


KEY TAKEAWAYS:

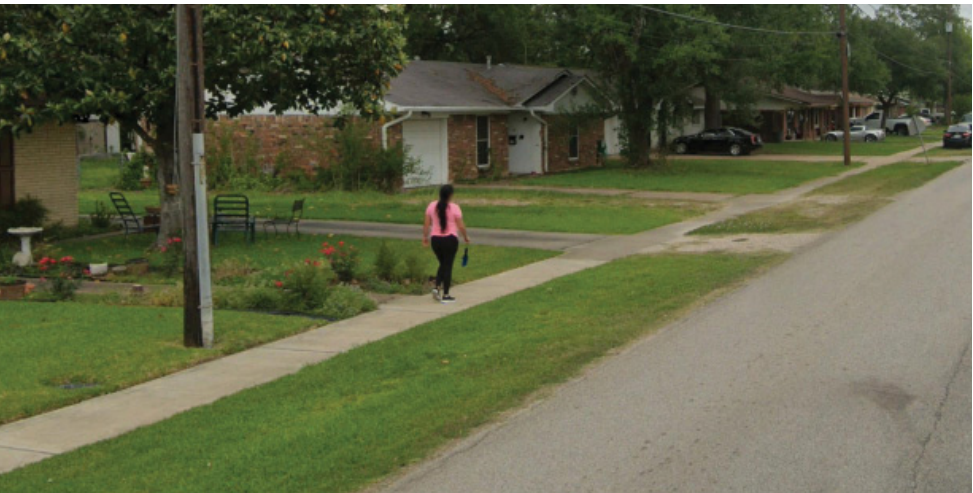
- Current plan shows a strong investment by the city to build more sidewalks throughout the city
- Future projects should target widening existing sidewalks to a width of 6'
- As streets are improved, a planted parkway buffer should be included to create safer walking routes
- Removing bar ditches and taking drainage underground on key streets could create opportunities for sidewalks along streets where it would currently not be possible
- Drainageways could also be converted to underground to allow opportunity for greenbelt pathways on top of those underground drainage pipes

NEEDS ASSESSMENT - CONNECTIVITY

Capital Improvement Projects - Sidewalks



Livable Centers CIP Improvements

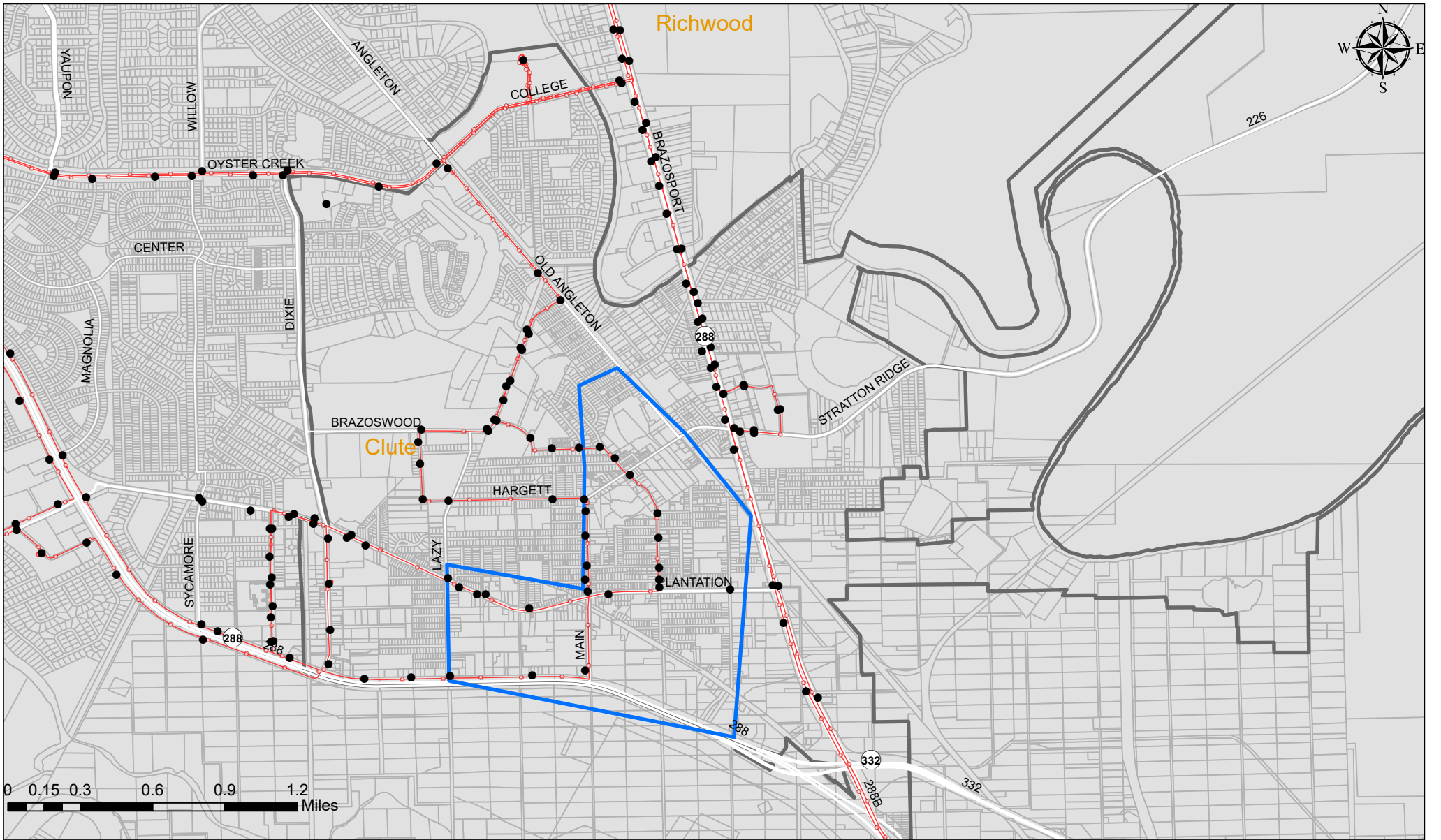


KEY TAKEAWAYS:

NEEDS ASSESSMENT - CONNECTIVITY

Transit

- Existing Connect Transit System
- Many Stops on Routes, could be consolidated to improve efficiency
- At least 1 hour between leave times, needs to be around 15 minutes to 30 minutes maximum
- No stops along Commerce Avenue, which is home to several of the employers in the Study Area
- The transit service is used as Brazoria County has ridership numbers of 75,658 over the past year. Para Transit ridership has ridership numbers of 11,136 over the past year.
- Transit stops are not very appealing, could be improved as a way to increase ridership
- Transit stops need information regarding schedules and fares even if it is just a QR code



Livable Centers Bus Routes and Stops • Connect Bus Stops — Connect Bus Routes City of Clute Study Area



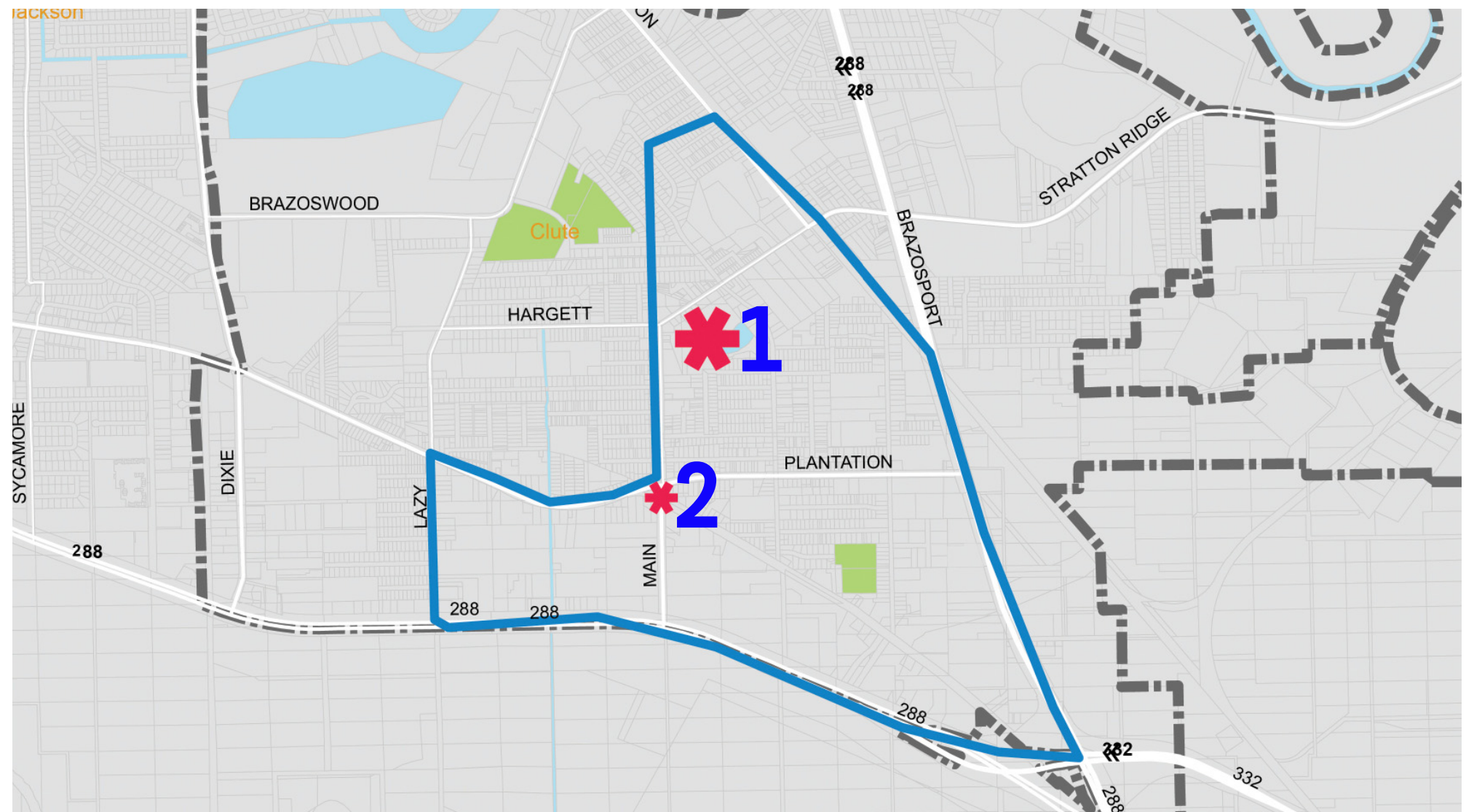
LOCATION 1:
Shanks Lake is an amazing natural resource, occurring in the heart of Clute. It is currently being under utilized and has massive amounts of potential. Natural features like Shanks Lake have been the center of numerous developments of similar intent and having a natural feature such as this greatly increases the chances of success of development efforts. Unfortunately all of the land around the lake and the lake itself is privately owned, requiring that any re-development efforts will be a public / private partnership and will require working closely with the land owners as we explore plans for this area.

LOCATION 2:
Town Center retail areas typically need an anchor that helps to give justification to any re-development efforts. El Toro can function as that anchor as the surrounding properties are re-imagined, to create a place in the center of the study area and give Clute that much need heart of the city. Having a destination restaurant like El Toro in place can attract people to the area and once they are there they could have new businesses to visit and spend time at. Improvements to multi-modal and walkability of Clute can allow people to get to the are by other ways beyond their car.

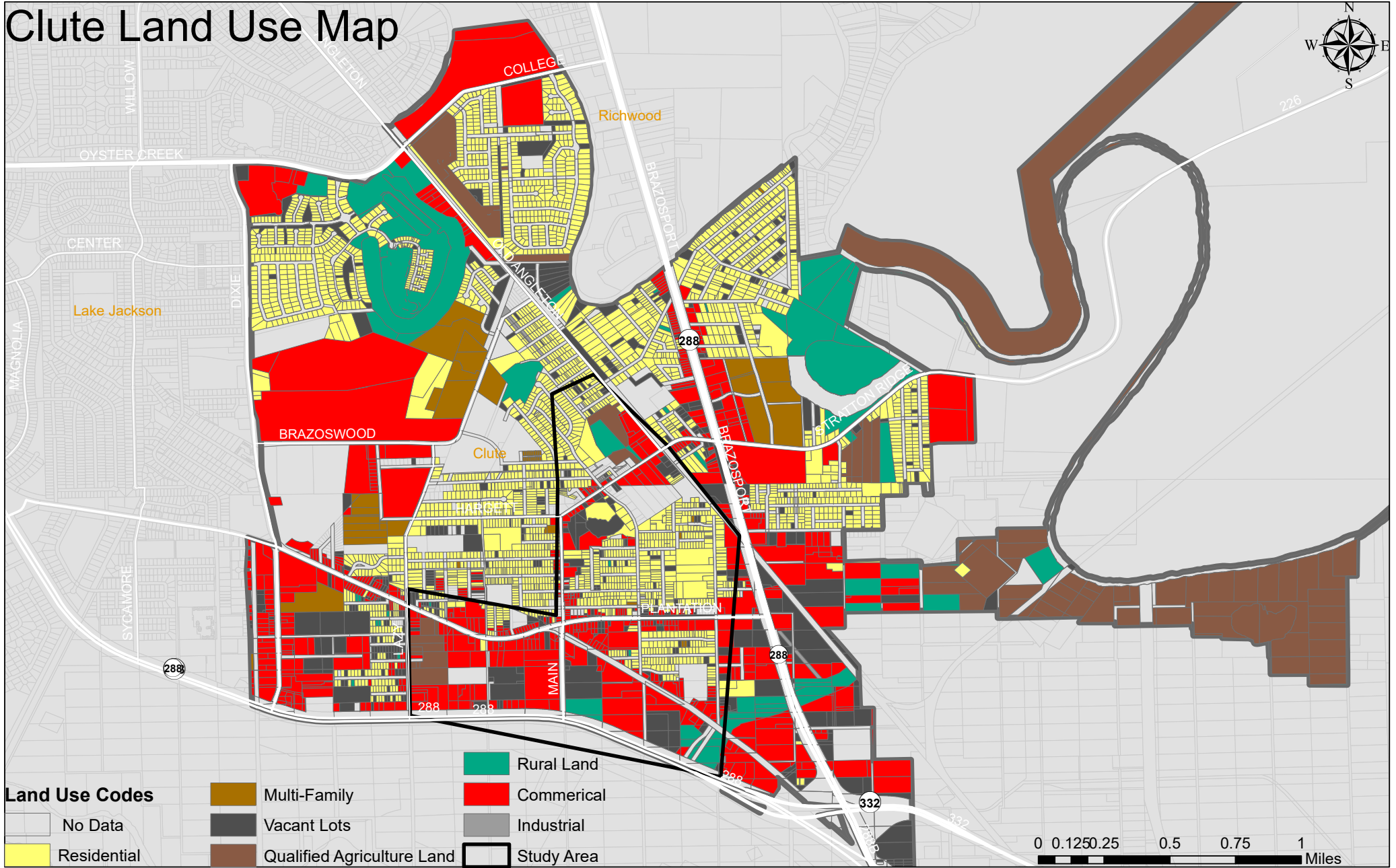


NEEDS ASSESSMENT - PLACEMAKING

Potential Opportunities



- Mostly single-family residential
- Overall lack of density
- Most properties along the 2 major thoroughfares are zoned for commercial or retail uses
- Most properties around placemaking location 1 are currently zoned for neighborhood commercial, which will work well with any placemaking planning
- Most properties around placemaking location 2 are currently zoned as business district, this will also work well with any placemaking planning



NEEDS ASSESSMENT - DEMOGRAPHICS

Study Area Demographics

Total Population

Texas	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX Metro Area	Brazoria County, Texas	Clute city, Texas	Livable Centers Study Area
28,635,442	6,979,613	368,062	11,655	5485

Race/Ethnicity Demographics

Race or Ethnicity	Texas	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX Metro Area	Brazoria County, Texas	Clute city, Texas	Livable Centers Study Area
Hispanic or Latino	39.40%	37.40%	31.00%	63.00%	57.6%
White alone	41.40%	35.50%	46.10%	24.90%	32.2%
Black or African American alone	11.80%	16.80%	14.10%	11.10%	6.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.20%	0.20%	0.40%	0.00%	0.4%
Asian alone	4.90%	7.80%	6.60%	0.00%	0.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.10%	0.00%	0.00%	0.10%	0.1%
Some other race alone	0.20%	0.20%	0.10%	0.00%	0.2%
Two or more races	2.00%	2.00%	1.70%	0.90%	2.1%

Median Age

	Texas	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX Metro Area	Brazoria County, Texas	Clute city, Texas	Livable Centers Study Area
Median age (years)	34.8	34.5	36	30.6	34.1

Median Home Value

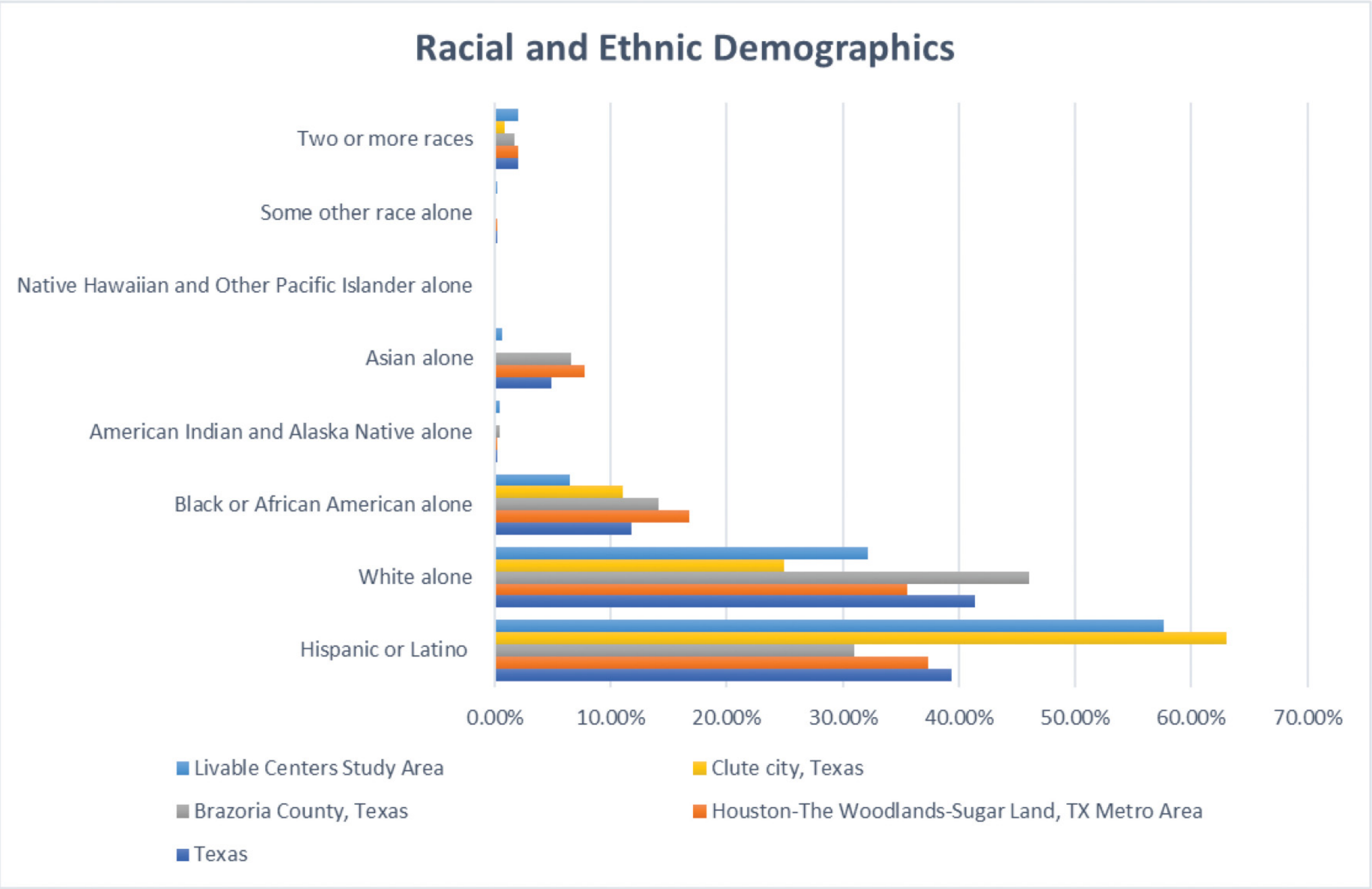
	Texas	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX Metro Area	Brazoria County, Texas	Clute city, Texas	Livable Centers Study Area
Median Home Value	\$ 187,200	\$ 208,100	\$ 213,100	\$ 129,700	\$ 93,800

Vacancy Rate

	Texas	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX Metro Area	Brazoria County, Texas	Clute city, Texas	Livable Centers Study Area
Vacancy Rate	9.5%	8.4%	9.9%	22.9%	14.8%

Unemployment Rate

	Texas	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX Metro Area	Brazoria County, Texas	Clute city, Texas	Livable Centers Study Area
Unemployment Rate	5.3%	5.9%	4.8%	7.7%	11.9%

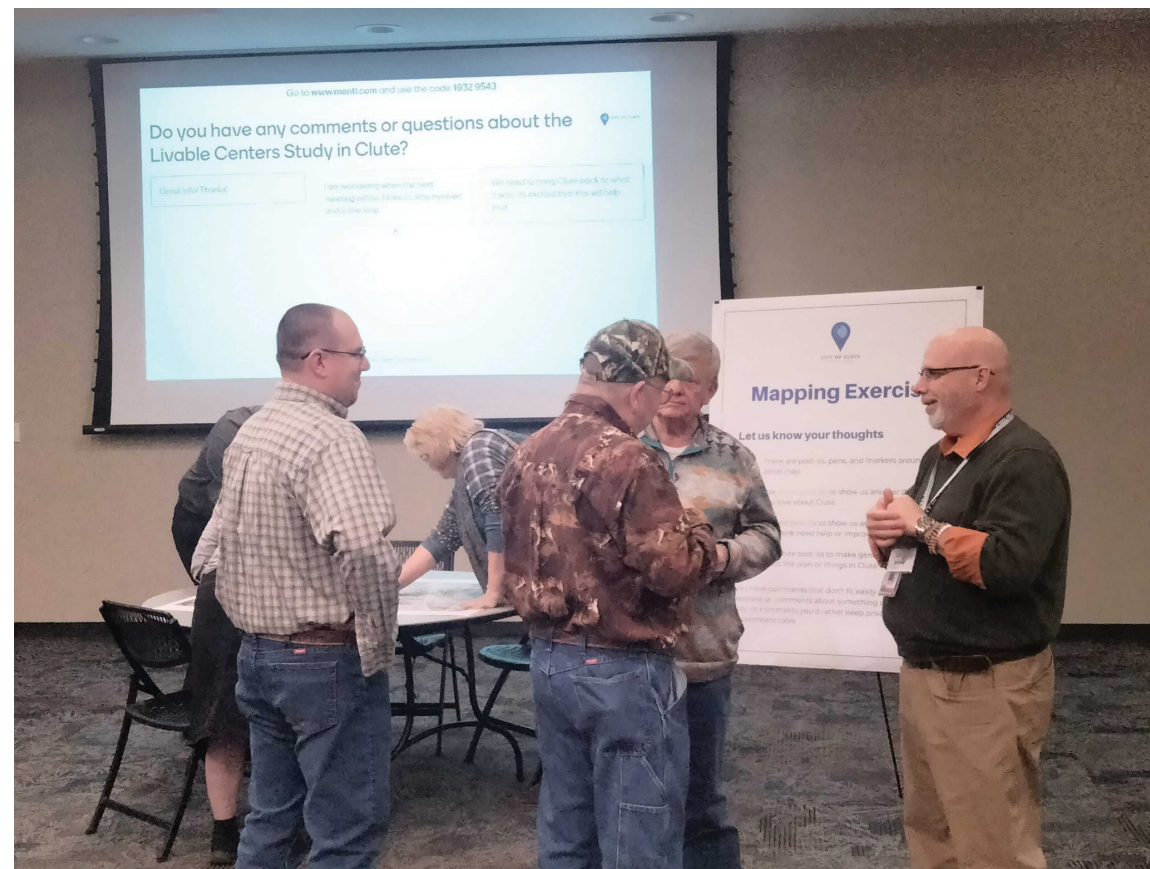


PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The single most important aspect of any city planning exercise is input from the city residents. The greater the local involvement, the more successful the project. To this end, several avenues were provided to promote participation and garner input from the largest number of Clute residents possible.

These Outreach efforts included:

- Stakeholder Committee Meetings
- Project Website
- Community Survey
- Town Hall Meeting (In-Person)
- Town Hall Meeting (Virtual)
- Pop-Up Meetings (In-Person)



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

The City of Clute, along with the project team of Kevin Sloan Studio and Gap Strategies, has facilitated four stakeholder meetings with a group of 17 stakeholders from across the City of Clute. These stakeholders represent community organizations, major employers, civic clubs, and different areas and perspectives from within the city and region.

Results from the initial Stakeholder Meeting work session, identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the community.

STRENGTHS

- Small town feel
- proximity to Houston
- easy access to leaders
- knowledgeable/proactive
- speed of business
- Center of Brazosport area
- outdoor activities
- Festivals (mosquito!)
- Arts, culture, education (world class)
- higher ed and public ed.
- transportation corridor
- unified community
- commitment from leaders
- center of economic activity
- rural, open space
- path of growth
- Community events & giving back
- good paying jobs
- industry-college partnerships
- STEM and CTE center
- Support for kids, community, ed.

WEAKNESSES

- landlocked
- high housing costs
- No city center or downtown
- Sense of place
- Connectivity in Clute
- Hwy./feeder roads for economic dev.
- underdeveloped areas
- regional perception
- regional identity inside Clute and more broadly
- transportation network

THREATS

- Rising interest rates/costs
- competition
- improvements we make benefit others
- potential resistance to change (NIMBY)
- Age diversity
- Language/cultural barriers
- Technology advancing (make sure we plan for it)
- Aging infrastructure
- Parking/zoning/HOA regulations
- playing catch up

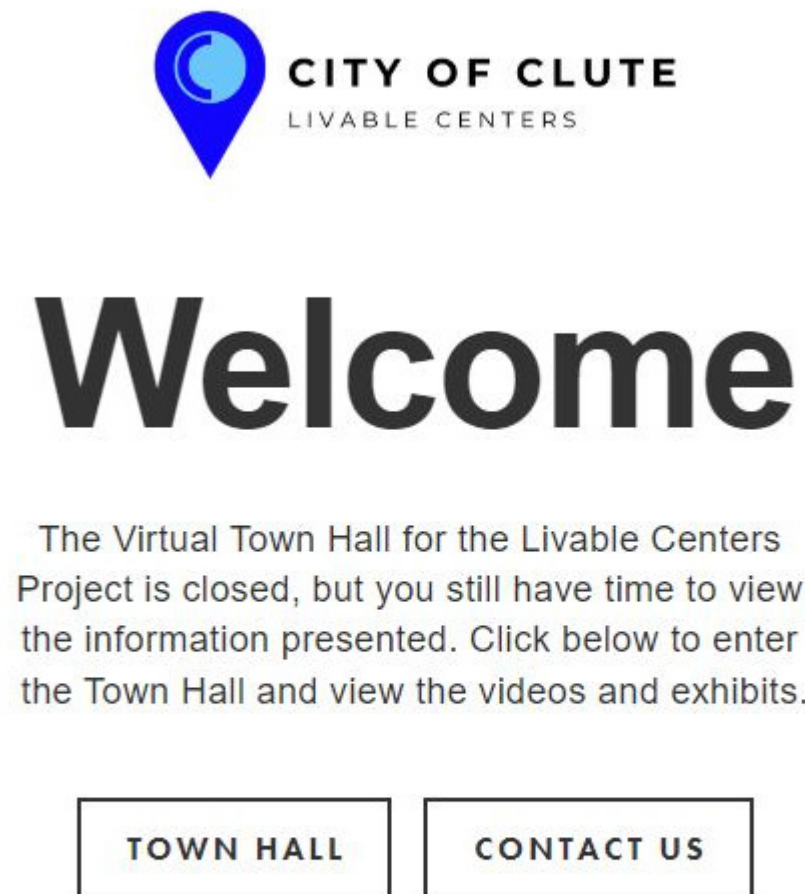
OPPORTUNITIES

- can change perception
- marketing/communication about Clute in a personal way
- unifying community with town center or connectivity (sidewalks)
- connection between amenities and housing
- Placemaking and branding
- Access to activities
- Implementation of plan/study
- multi-modal TOD
- Ready for change/future

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - PROJECT WEBSITE

The Project Team designed, built, and hosted a project website, CluteLivableCenters.com, that was set up to house information about upcoming events, an eventual community survey, virtual town hall events, and presentations to the stakeholder committee.

This website was built to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 standards, ensuring that those with vision, mobility, hearing, or other disabilities could participate in the online public process just as easily as other citizens. The website was fully translatable into Spanish (or 130 other languages via Google Translate) and was designed to be mobile responsive, creating an equitable experience with the lowest barriers to involvement possible.



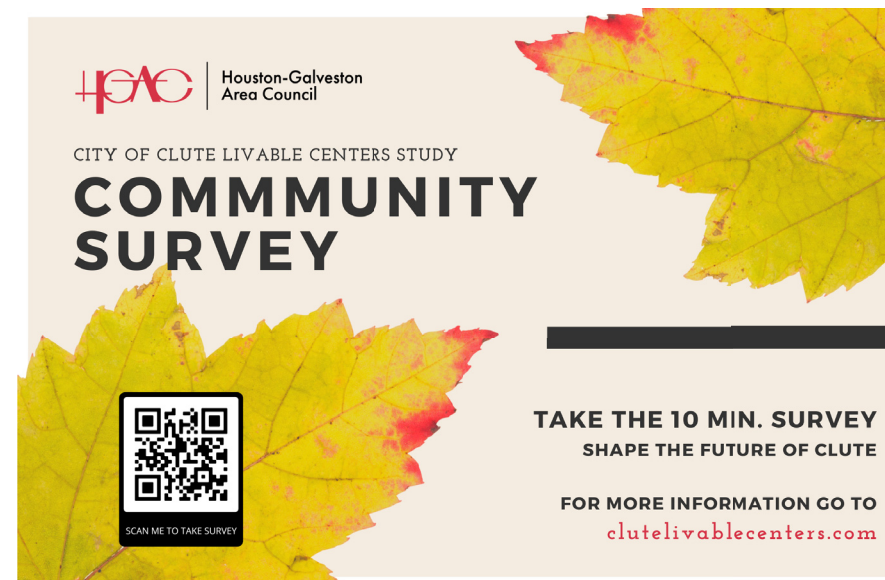
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - COMMUNITY SURVEY

The project team designed an 11-question survey that was available to the public online and in paper copies from October - December of 2022. The survey was available in both English and Spanish, as well as 130 other languages via Google Translate online.

The community survey was promoted through highly targeted social media advertising, outreach to local print media, and through the city's typical communication channels. Additionally, members of city staff, along with the project team, passed out fliers at city events (such as the city's official Halloween event).

- Overall, the survey had 1,521 survey respondents
- 71% filled out the survey on their mobile device

The community survey results are attached to this document.



Community Survey Results

January 2023



Introduction

The City of Clute, along with partners at the Houston-Galveston Area Council, Kevin Sloan Studio, and Gap Strategies put a survey into the field in the fall of 2022. That survey was open to the public - in both paper copy and online - from October 2022 through the end of December.



Number of respondents

A total of **1,521** people filled out the online survey



How people responded

71% of respondents filled the survey out on their mobile device
29% of respondents filled out the survey on a desktop computer



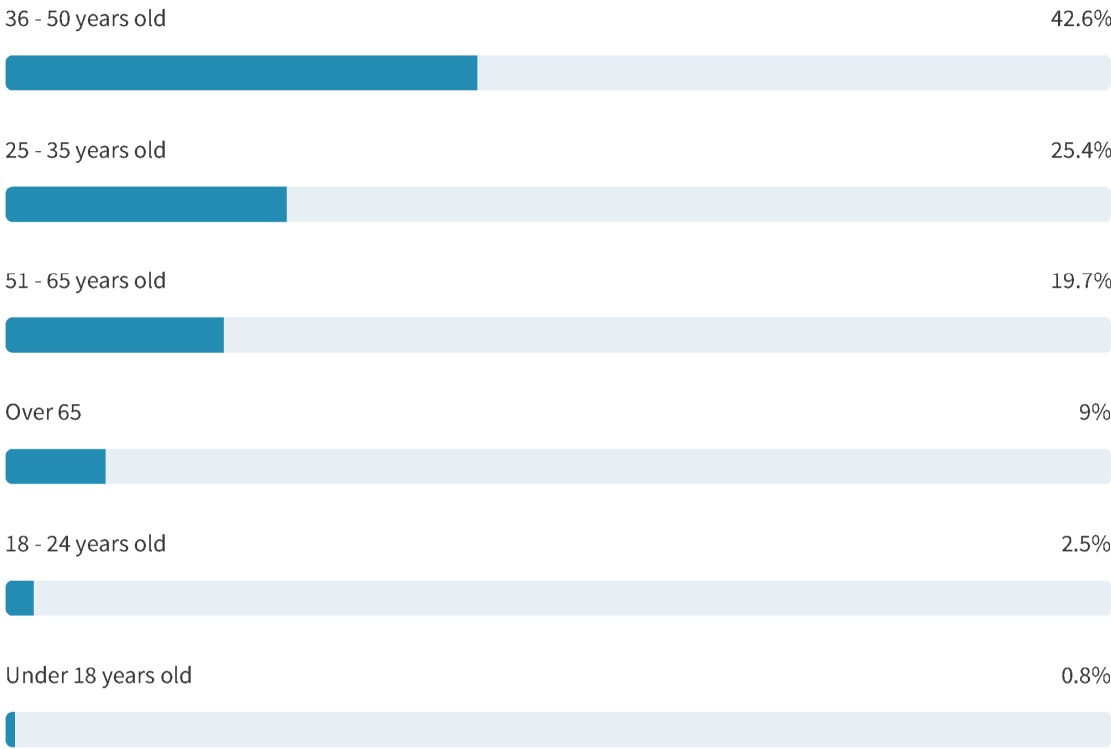
Completion rate

89% of people who began the survey completed all questions

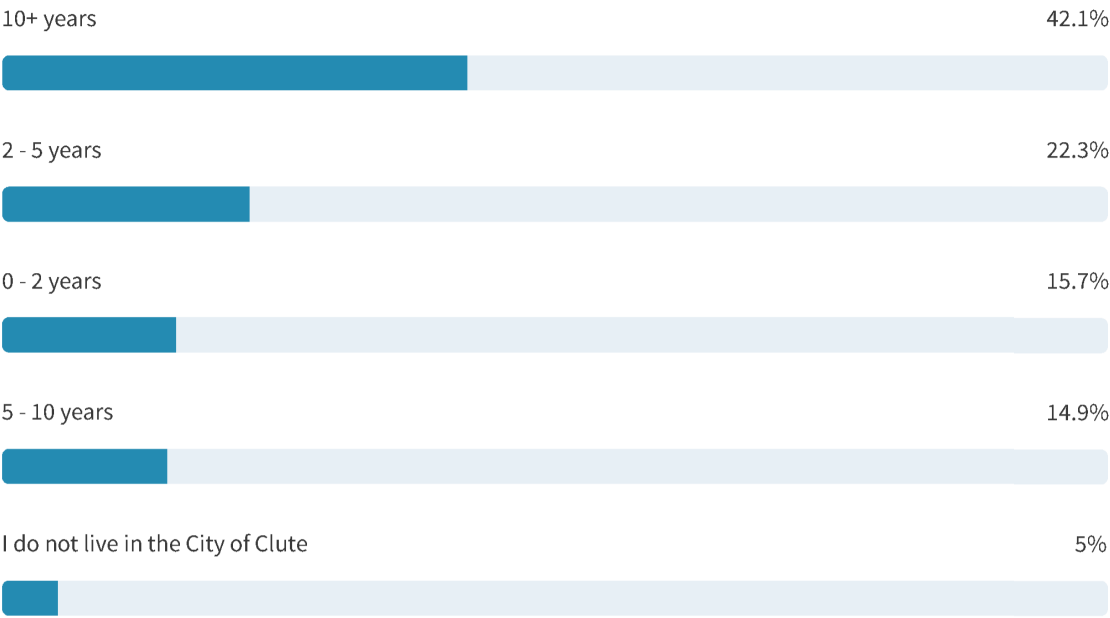
Note: responses were tallied even if a respondent did not answer all questions

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - COMMUNITY SURVEY

What is your age range?

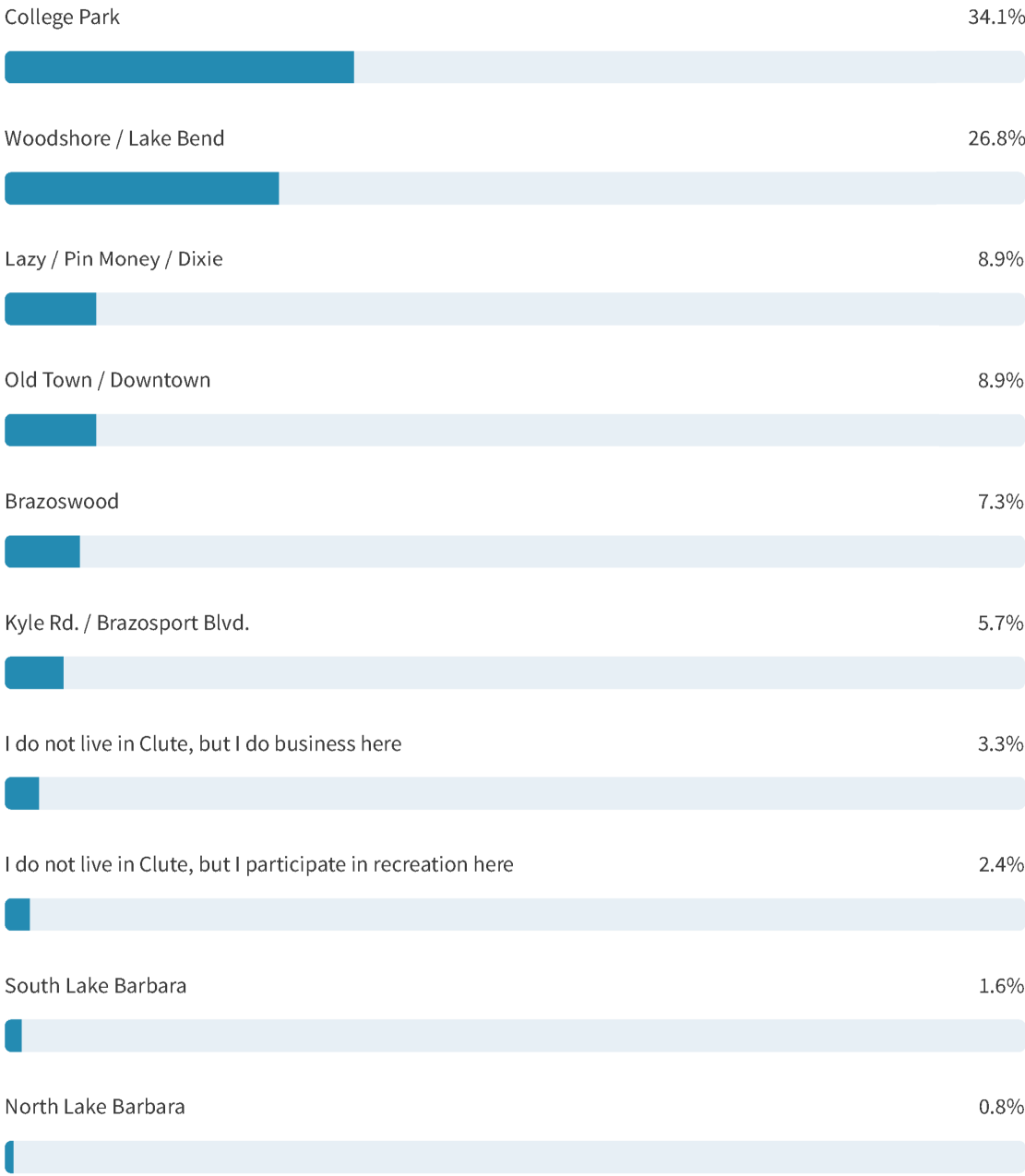


How long have you lived in Clute?

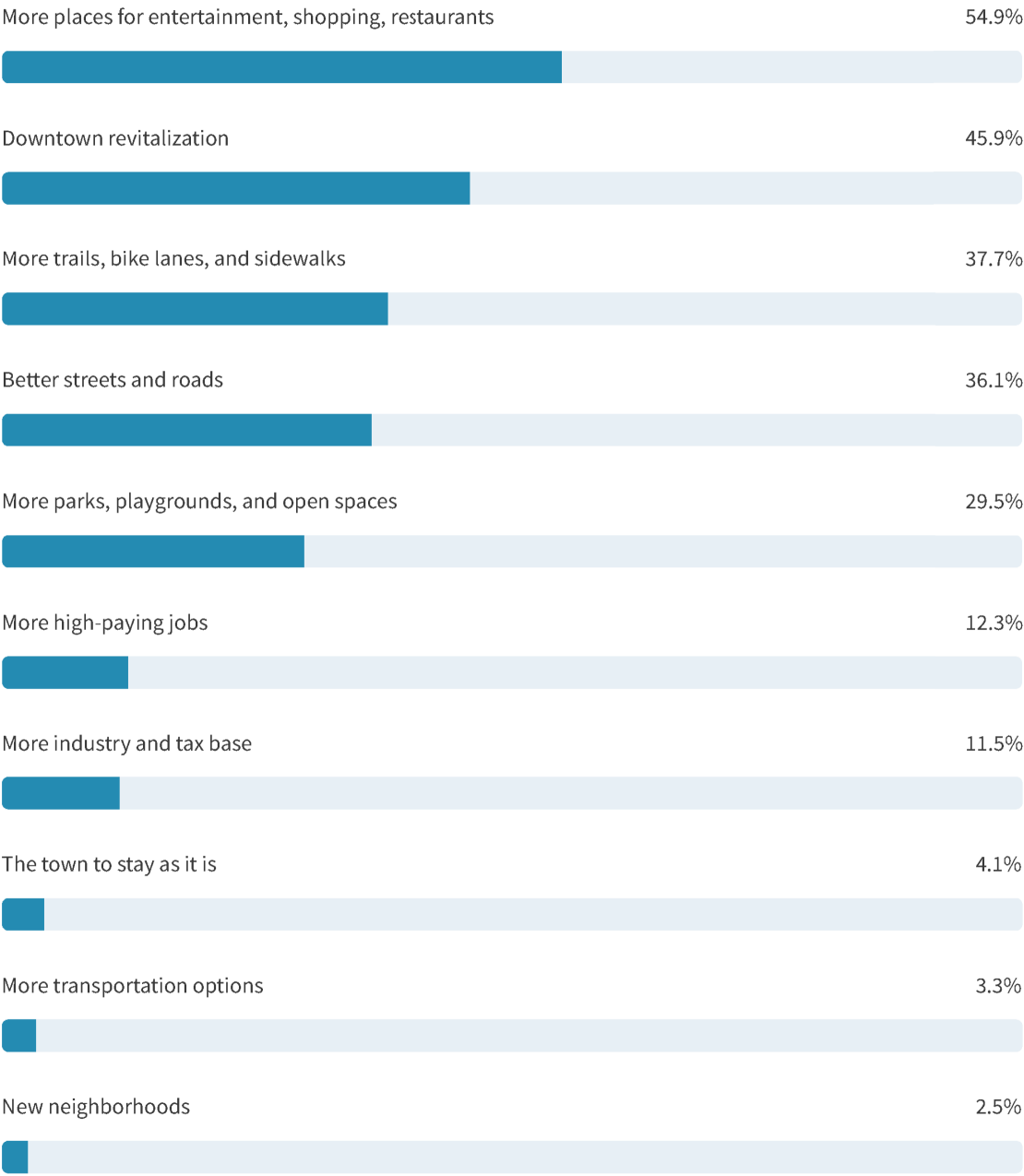


PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - COMMUNITY SURVEY

To help us understand your perspective in this conversation, please choose the description that best fits you.

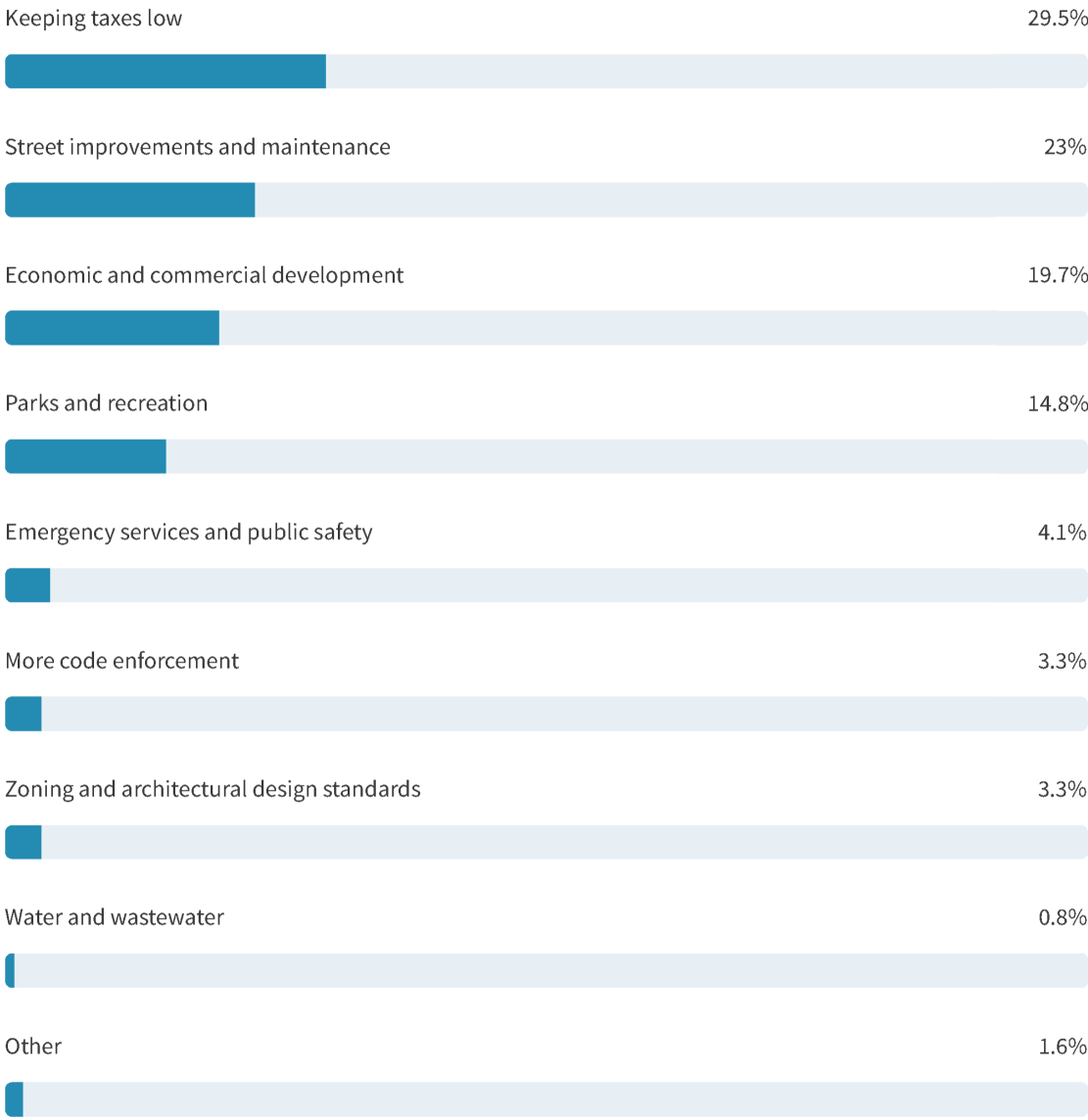


Thinking 5-10 years from now, what would you most like to see in Clute?

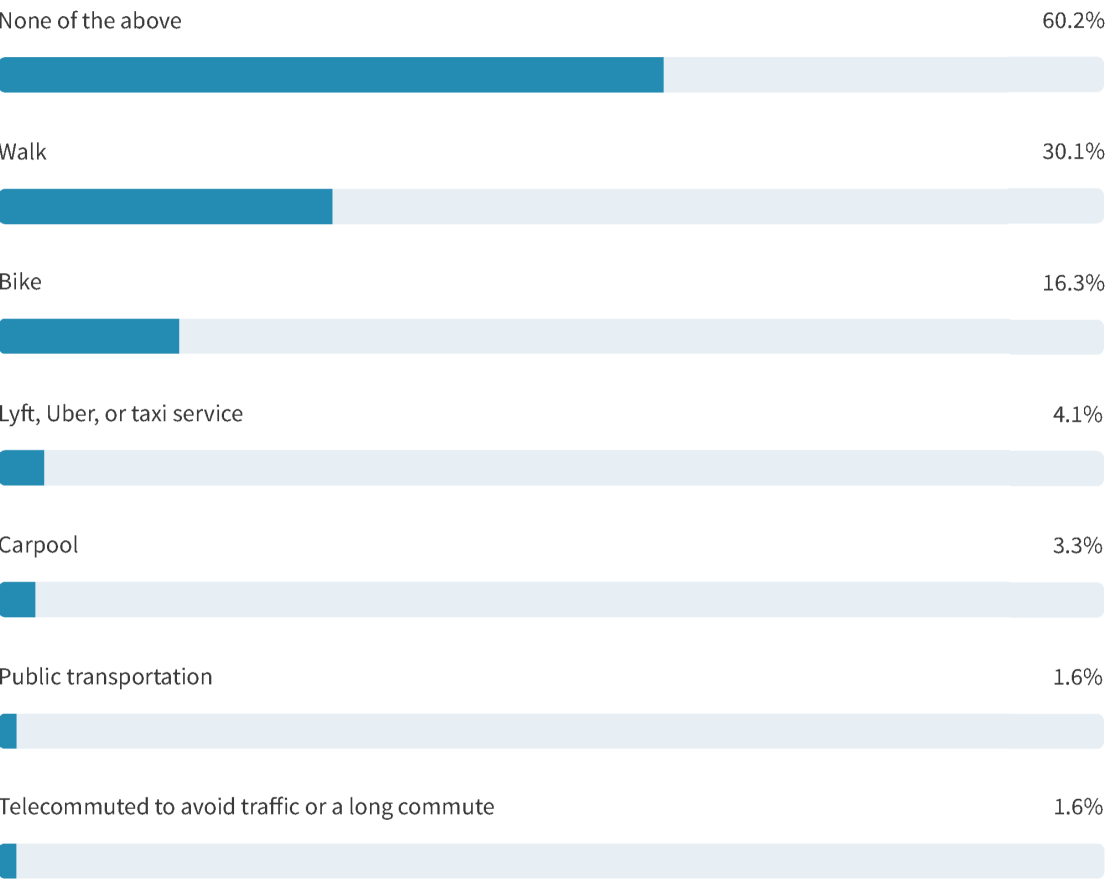


PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - COMMUNITY SURVEY

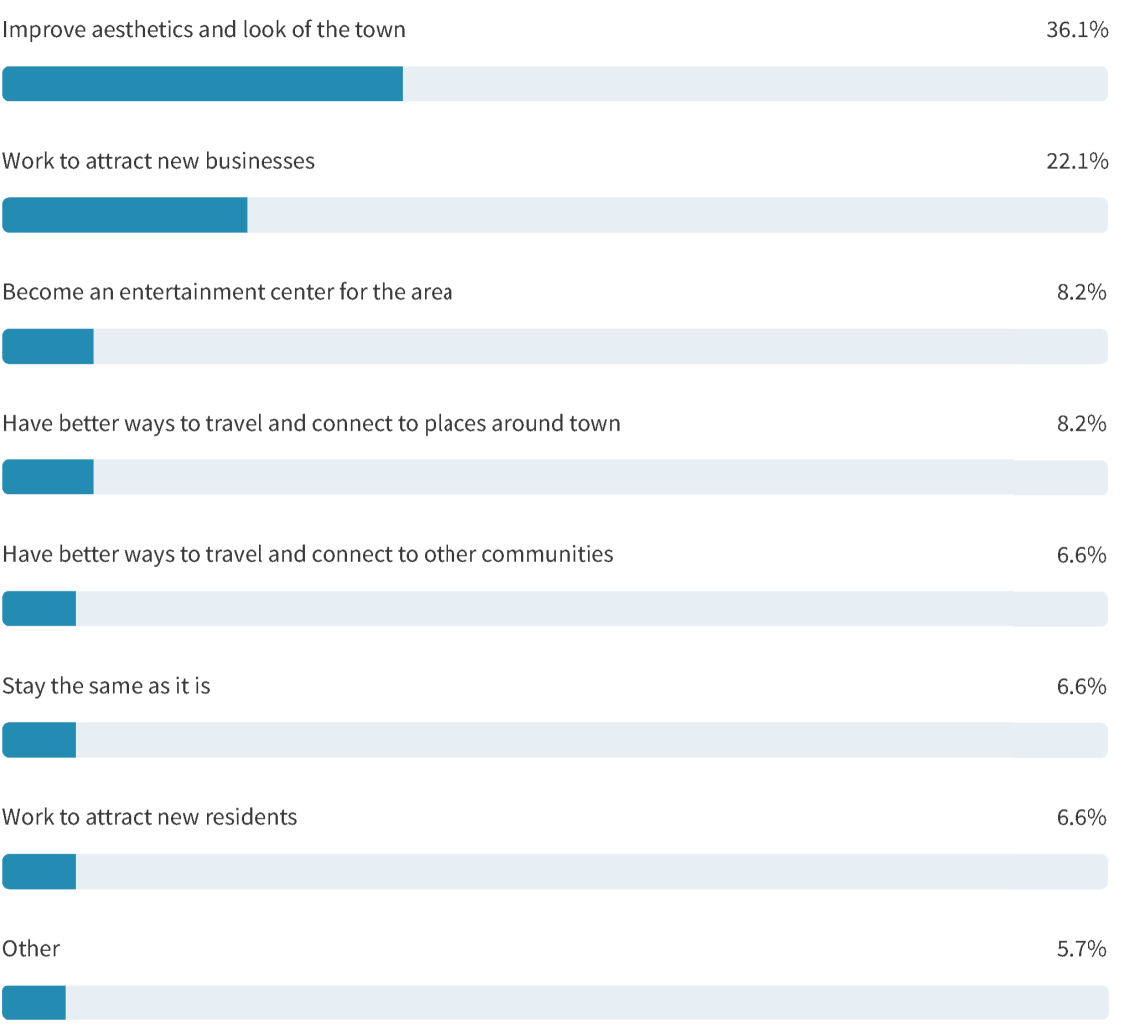
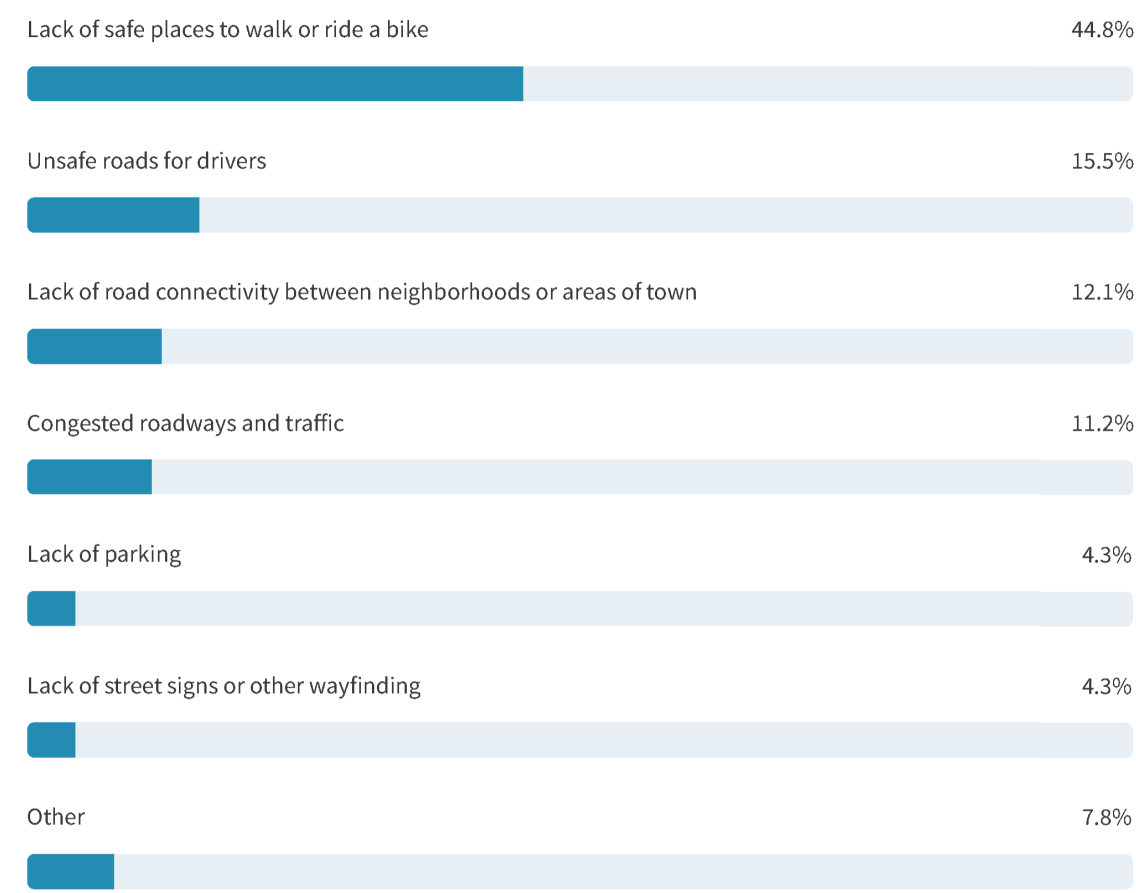
Where would you most like to see City leaders put their priorities?



Other than recreation, have you used one of the following methods to make at least one trip in the last 30 days?
Check all that apply.

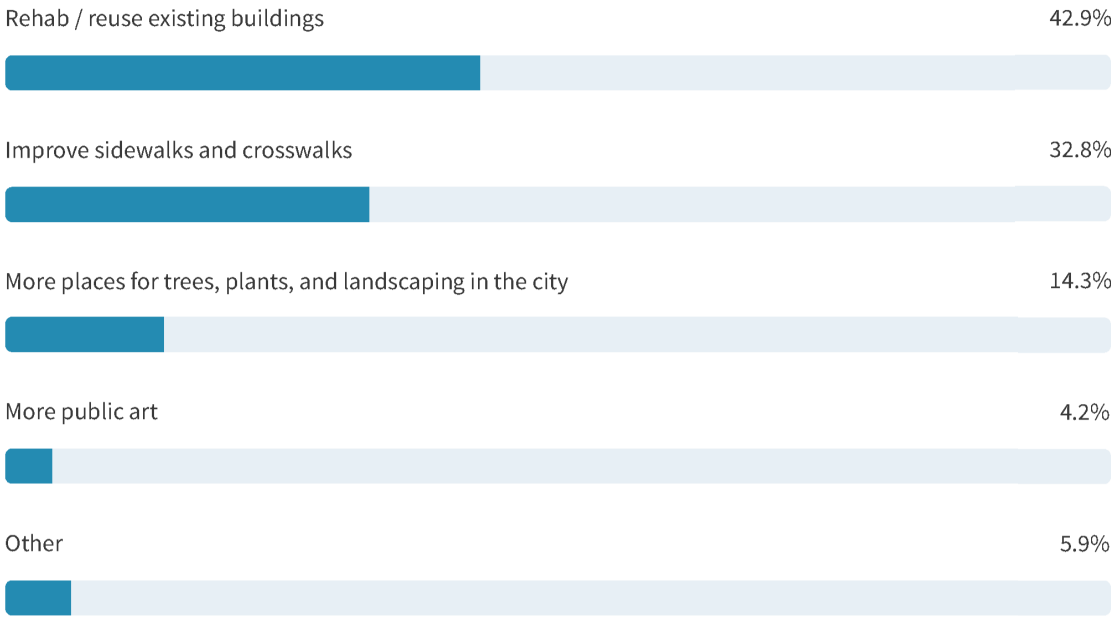


PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - COMMUNITY SURVEY

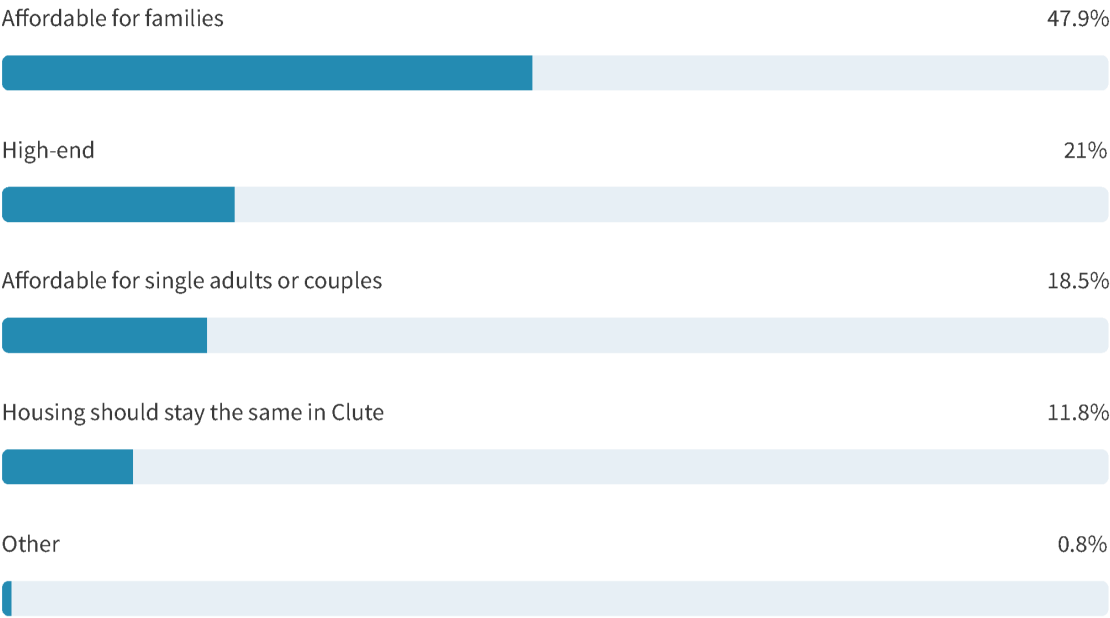


PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - COMMUNITY SURVEY

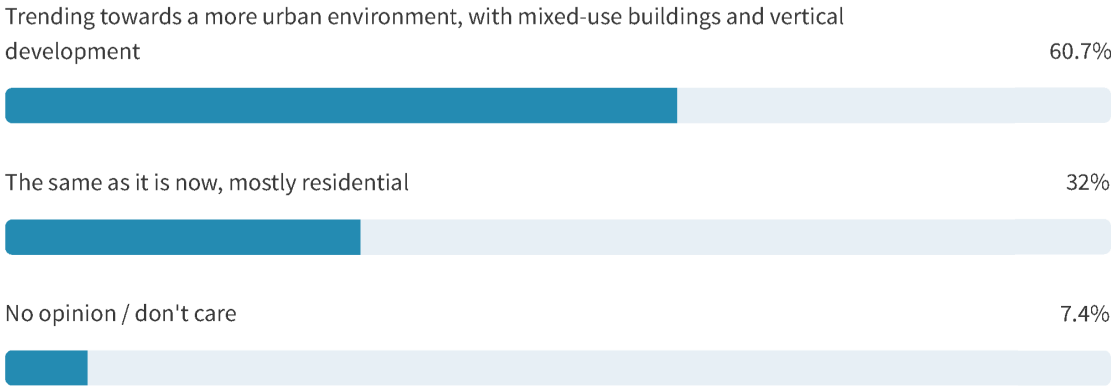
What improvements would you most like to see in Clute?



Clute should have more housing options that are...



In 5-10 years, where would you like to see the City of Clute?



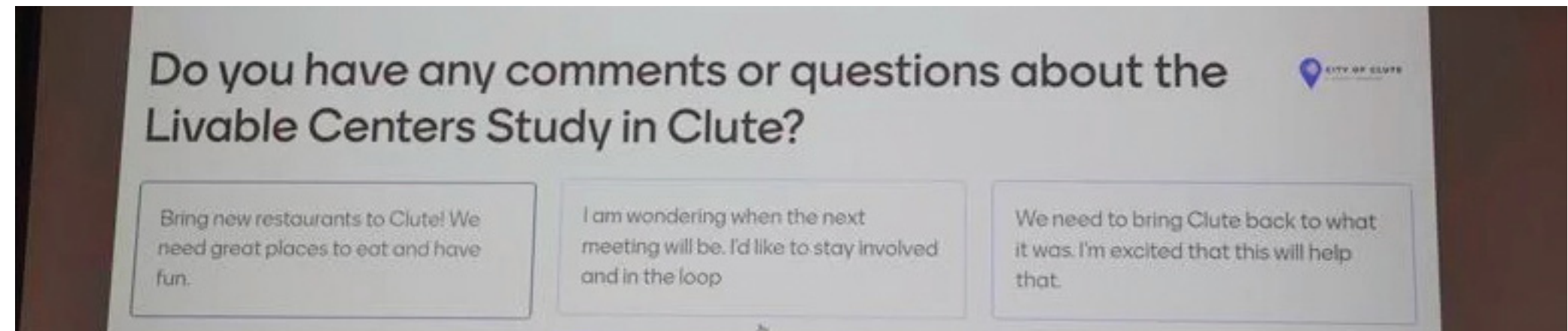
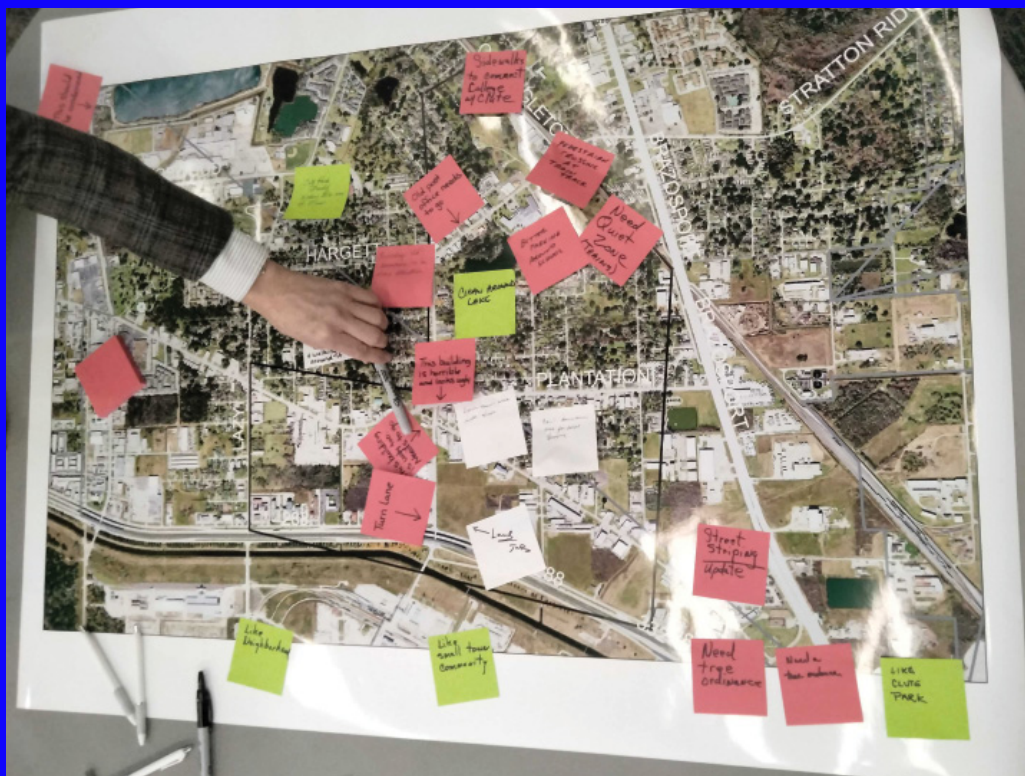
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - TOWN HALL MEETING (IN PERSON)

The city, along with the project team, hosted an in-person town hall event on January 19, 2023.

The town hall was promoted through newsletters, outreach to local print media, and through the city's typical communication channels.

Here are some details and metrics from the in-person town hall:

- Seven instructional boards about the project and process
- Results from the completed community survey
- A mapping exercise for citizens to tell us what they like (and don't like) about existing conditions in the study area
- 30 residents attended
- 20 recorded sign-ins
- 23 mapping exercise comments
- Mobile phone voting exercise with 92 votes cast and 8 comments





PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - TOWN HALL MEETING

(Virtual)

The city, along with the project team, hosted a virtual town hall event on the project website, CluteLivableCenters.com, for a week starting April 28, 2023.

The virtual town hall housed the following information:

- A welcome video to orient participants to the virtual town hall experience
- Seven informational slides regarding the purpose of the study, what's happened so far, and what the city and project team are wanting to hear from citizens
- An animation showing Shanks Lake, a focal point of the study, in several phases of development
- An animation showing Clute Town Center, a focal point of the study, in several phases of development
- Street cross-sections showing potential options for Main Street, Plantation Drive, Commerce Street, and Shanks Road
- A quick, 4-question survey asking citizens about their priorities and comfort level with the study's progress and work

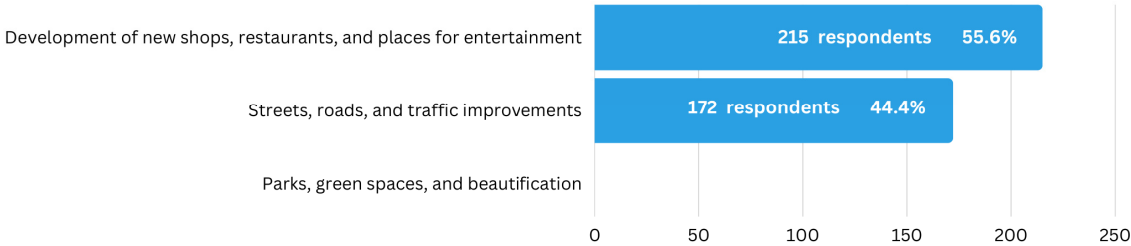
The virtual town hall survey results are attached to this document.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - TOWN HALL MEETING

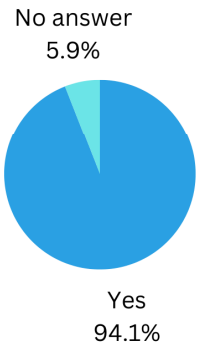
(Virtual)

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL RESULTS

After viewing the different presentations and exhibits today, what would you like to see city leaders tackle first?

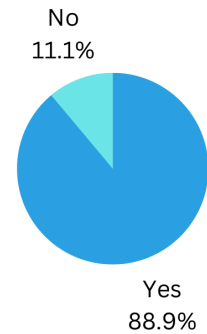


Overall, do you think the stakeholder committee and project team are headed in the right direction?



Yes	364
No	0
No answer	23

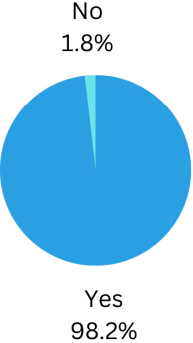
On Shanks Lake, do you think the stakeholder committee and project team are headed in the right direction?



Yes	344
No	43
No answer	0

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL RESULTS

On Clute Town Center, do you think the stakeholder committee and project team are headed in the right direction?



Yes	380
No	7
No answer	0

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - POP-UP MEETING

(In Person)

The first Pop-Meeting was held as part of the City of Clute Drive-Thru Trick or Treat event. The main purpose of this event was to distribute flyers about the Livable Centers study Community Survey. The Flyers distributed were in English and Spanish.





PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - POP-UP MEETING

(In Person)

After some concerns from stakeholders about getting enough input from citizens within the study area, the city, along with the project team, hosted a pop-up meeting at the Brazoria County Dream Center. This meeting was held during the Dream Center’s food bank hours. As people queued to access services at the Dream Center, city staff and the project team were on hand to give citizens a quick, 4 question survey.

This survey was provided through an online QR code, as well as paper copies. The online survey was translatable into many languages and the paper copies were available in English and Spanish. The majority of participants opted to submit their feedback via paper survey.

Here are some details and metrics from the pop-up meeting:

- Online 4-question survey, with paper surveys available
- Questions about transportation and development of study area

Survey Respondents	
	Totals
Number of respondents (total)	142
Number of Spanish-language respondents	43

Which method of transportation do you use most often?	
	Percentage
Personal vehicle	87%
Bus	8%
Walking	4%
Bicycling	
Carpool/vanpool	1%
Rideshare (Uber / Lyft)	
Other	

What’s the biggest challenge you face when trying to make a trip without your car (for example: using rideshare, walking, or riding the bus)?	
	Percentage
It’s not easy to get where I need to go.	40%
It takes too long to get where I need to go.	32%
I don’t experience any challenges when trying to travel without my car	11%
Traveling other ways is unsafe.	17%
Traveling other ways is uncomfortable.	17%
Traveling other ways is unreliable.	22%

What do you most want to see in this part of the city?	
	Percentage
More affordable housing	55%
More places to walk or ride a bike	44%
More entertainment	35%
More places for recreation	38%
Places to eat	31%
Places to shop	28%
I don’t want to see change in this part of Clute	5%

Do you live in the City of Clute?	
	Percentage
Yes	38%
No, but I shop, eat, or run errands here	41%
No, but I work or go to school here	21%



CONNECTIVITY

One of the main goals of the Clute Livable Centers study is to improve connectivity within the study area for Clute residents, which will play a crucial role in increasing the livability of Clute. This study proposes several placemaking improvements to the study area, but for those areas to be successfully improved, connectivity is necessary. Connectivity is addressed by creating multi-modal solutions to the streets in the study area to allow alternatives to moving through the area beyond personal vehicles. This is done by a variety of improvements such as improving transportation infrastructure, improvements to public transit, protected bicycle pathways, improved pedestrian paths, etc. which, when combined, can increase the efficiency of the entire transportation system. Better designed multi-modal transportation systems also benefit automobiles by reducing congestion and travel times, aiding both residents and businesses in Clute.

Improving connectivity has other impacts beyond just getting people from place to place. It can be a vital part of improving the economic development of the area in which the improvements are implemented. Walkable areas create more attractive places for people to relocate to, and with these incoming residents also come new business interests in the area, including retail and restaurants. The new businesses bring new employment opportunities for residents, allowing them to be able to work closer to their home and thus may no longer be as dependent on their personal vehicle to get to and from work because the area is more easily traversed by either walking, bicycle, or transit.

Walkable, well-connected places become hubs for social engagement and building that sense of community. When residents can easily move around their neighborhood, it promotes interaction with neighbors, a sense of belonging and being more involved in their community, thus fostering a stronger social fabric and community cohesion. This also allows the residents to have better access to essential services in the community such as schools, healthcare facilities, grocery stores, and local jobs. That expanded access promotes healthier communities and improves the residents overall quality of life.

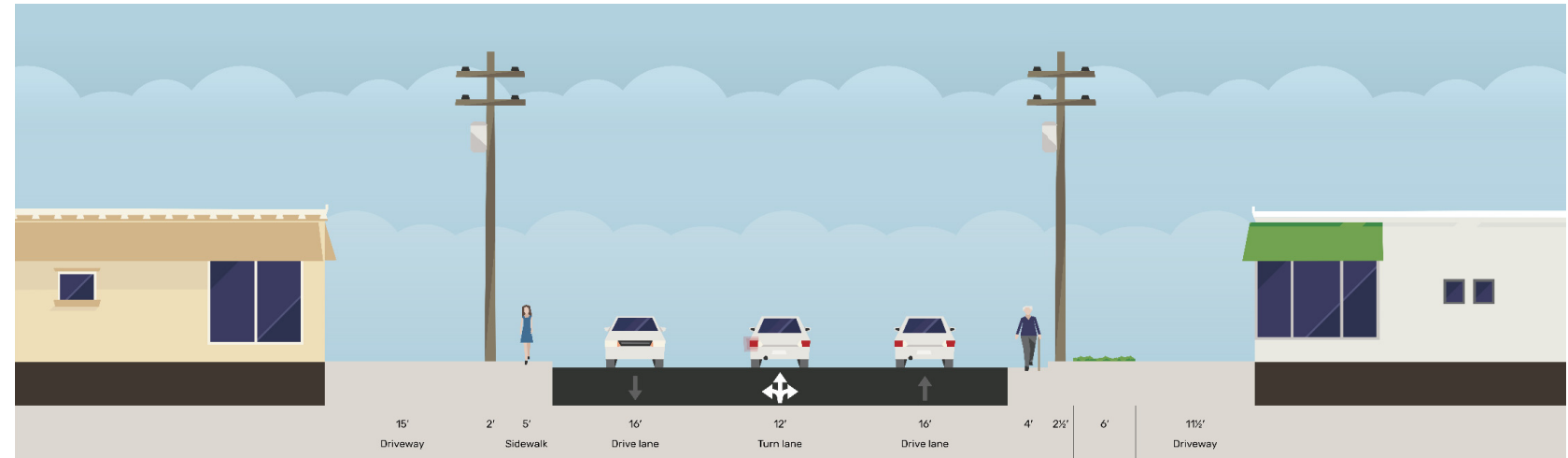
Promoting residents to travel around the area in which they live by other multi-modal ways reduces the strain on the infrastructure system and also improves air quality. That reduction of pressure on the transportation infrastructure can allow that infrastructure a longer, better performing life, allowing the city to allocate those infrastructure maintenance dollars towards other things that residents need. The improved air quality can help the health of area residents. Both of these assist in the creation of more sustainable neighborhoods and communities.

CONNECTIVITY

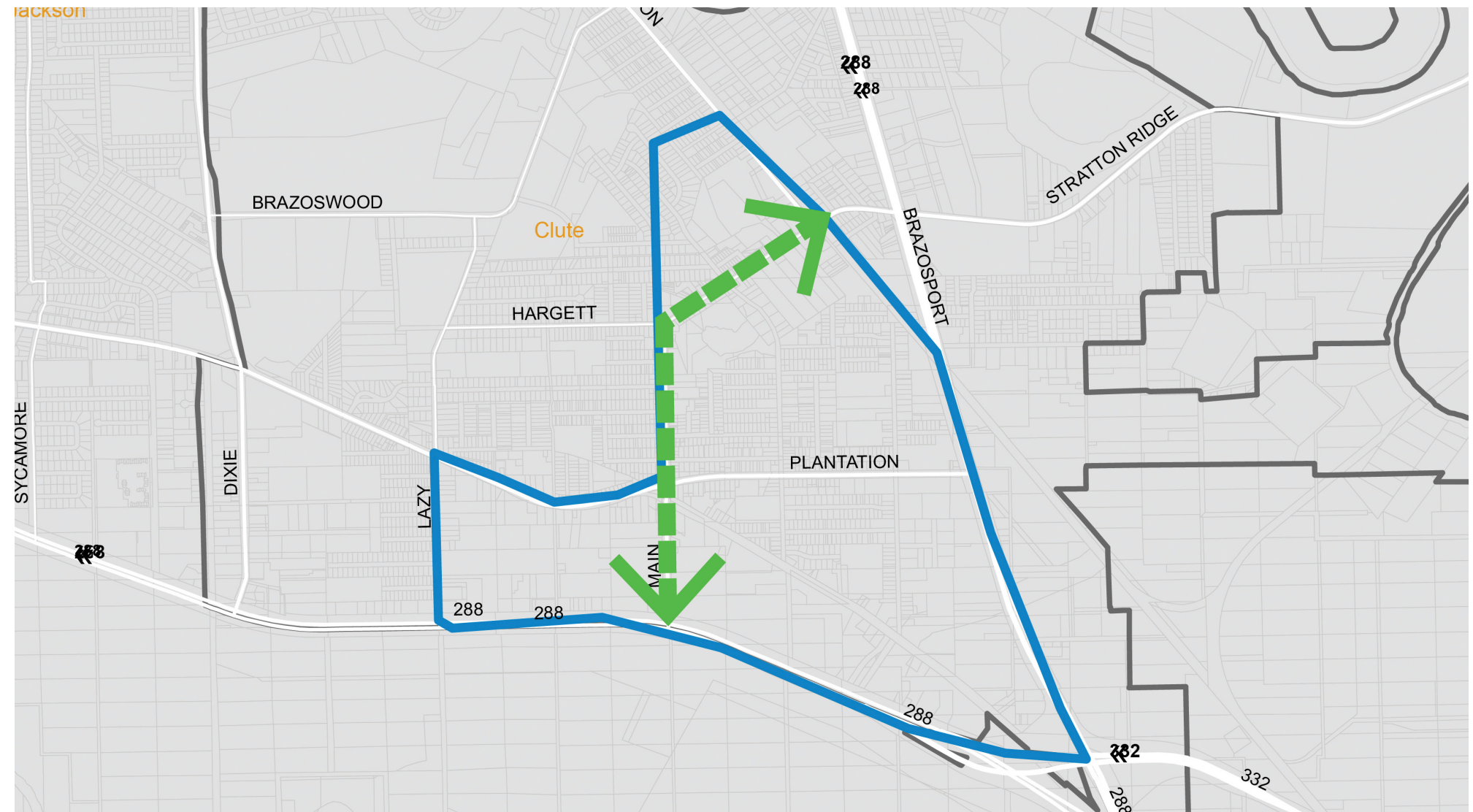
Main Street - North of Plantation

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Main North - South Thoroughfare through the Study Area
- Some trees but little to no street trees
- Overhead power lines create unappealing streetscape
- No bike lanes, protected or otherwise
- 16-foot wide travel lanes are much wider than needed, extra space can be used for added multi-modal options
- Existing network of sidewalks that can be improved upon, It currently exists next to the curb which is unappealing for walkability
- Little to no street lighting
- No on-street parking
- Most existing buildings are setback further than than would be preferred, possible reduction in setback requirements from city code perspective.



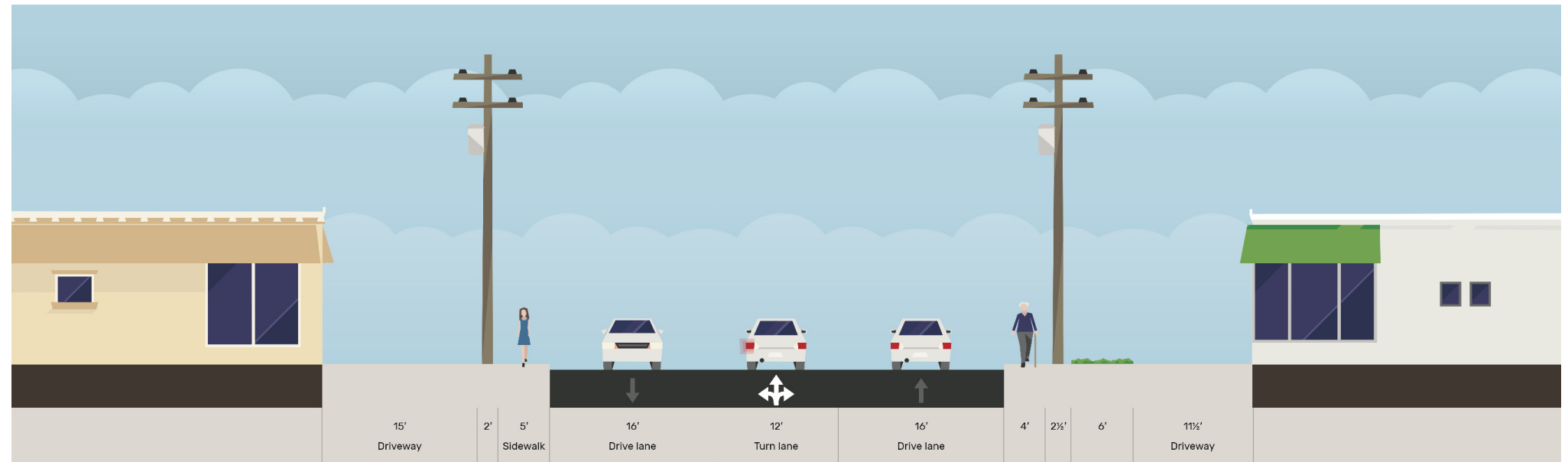
Existing Main Street - North of Plantation



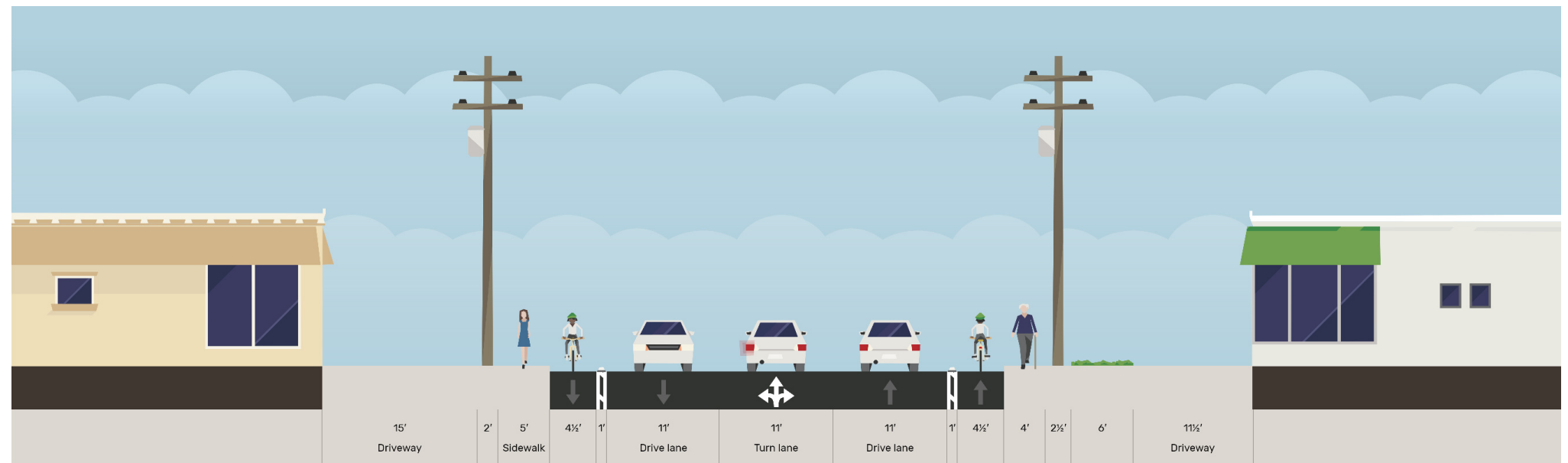
Option 1 looks at reimagining the street as it current exists in its current construction, which primarily centers on restriping the streets to allow for other multi-modal uses:

- Narrowing travel lanes from 16 feet to 11 feet in width
- Narrowing turn lane from 12 feet to 11 feet
- Adding bicycle lanes in both directions that are protected by traffic buttons

This should be viewed as an intermediary step to allow some multi-modal access without having to incur the hefty expense of rebuilding the entire street.



Existing Main Street - North of Plantation Drive

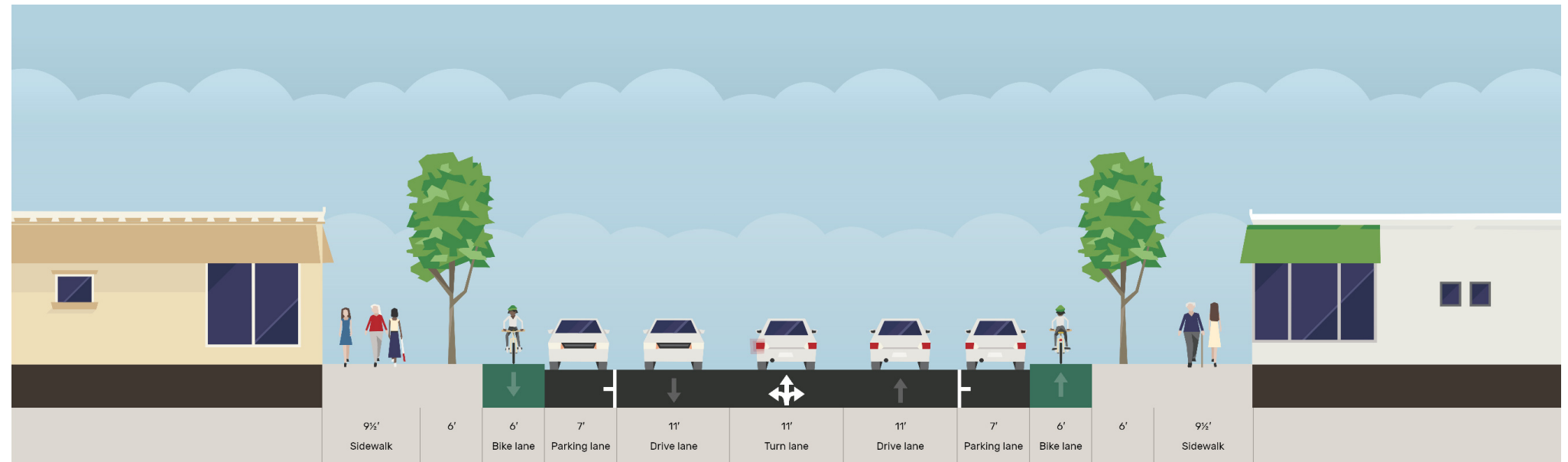


Main Street - North of Plantation Drive - Option 1

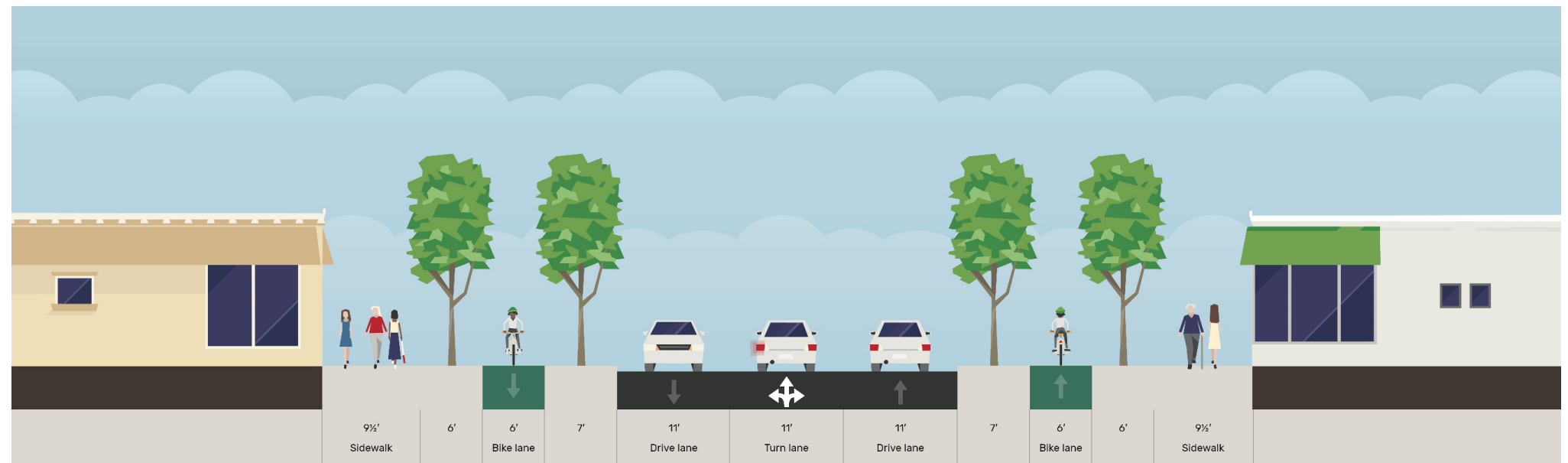
Option 2 looks at what is possible in the existing Right-Of-Way when you completely re-build the street:

- 11-foot-wide travel lanes
- 11-foot-wide turn lane
- 7-foot-wide parallel parking spaces on both sides of the street to provide parking to existing businesses and encourage revitalization of other buildings
- Bike lanes in each direction that are elevated to protect cyclists
- All above ground utilities will be taken under ground to allow for Tree lined streets free of utility conflicts
- Wide sidewalks to allow for pedestrians to easily move past one another
- Street Trees on both sides of the street provide shade as well as a pleasant aesthetic character
- Then roughly every 3 parallel parking spaces, there will be a planting area with a shade tree instead of a parking space to provide a second row of street trees that will not only provide more shade but will make the street feel more pedestrian friendly and less highway-like

This is the full vision for the street and can be implemented in locations that need it most as funds become available.



Main Street - North of Plantation Drive - Option 2



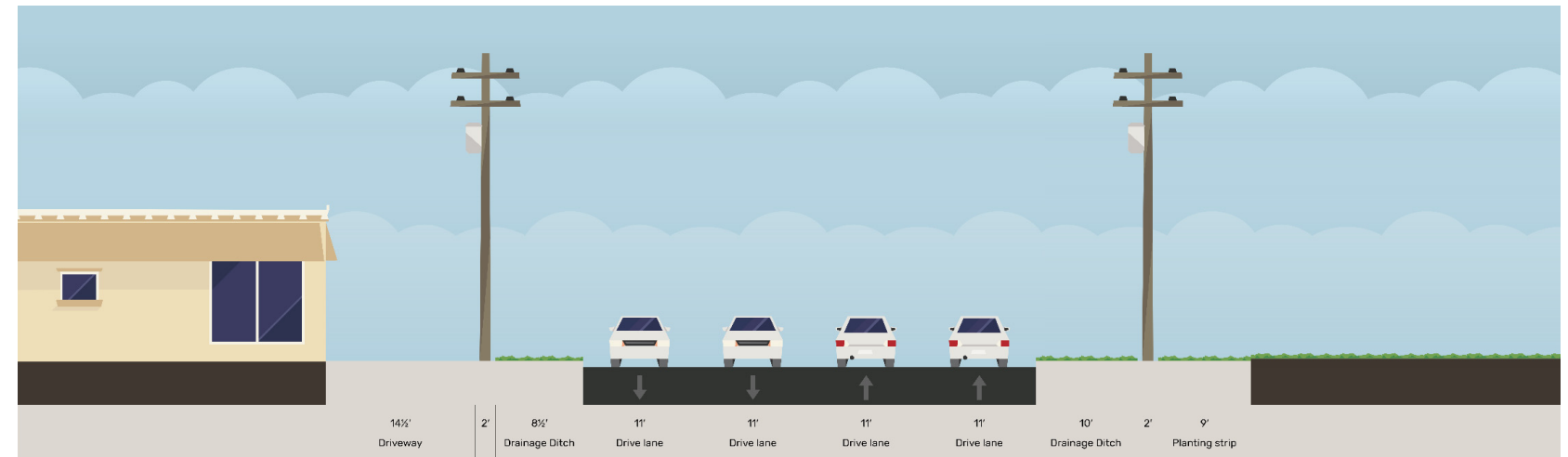
Main Street - North of Plantation Drive - Option 2-1

CONNECTIVITY

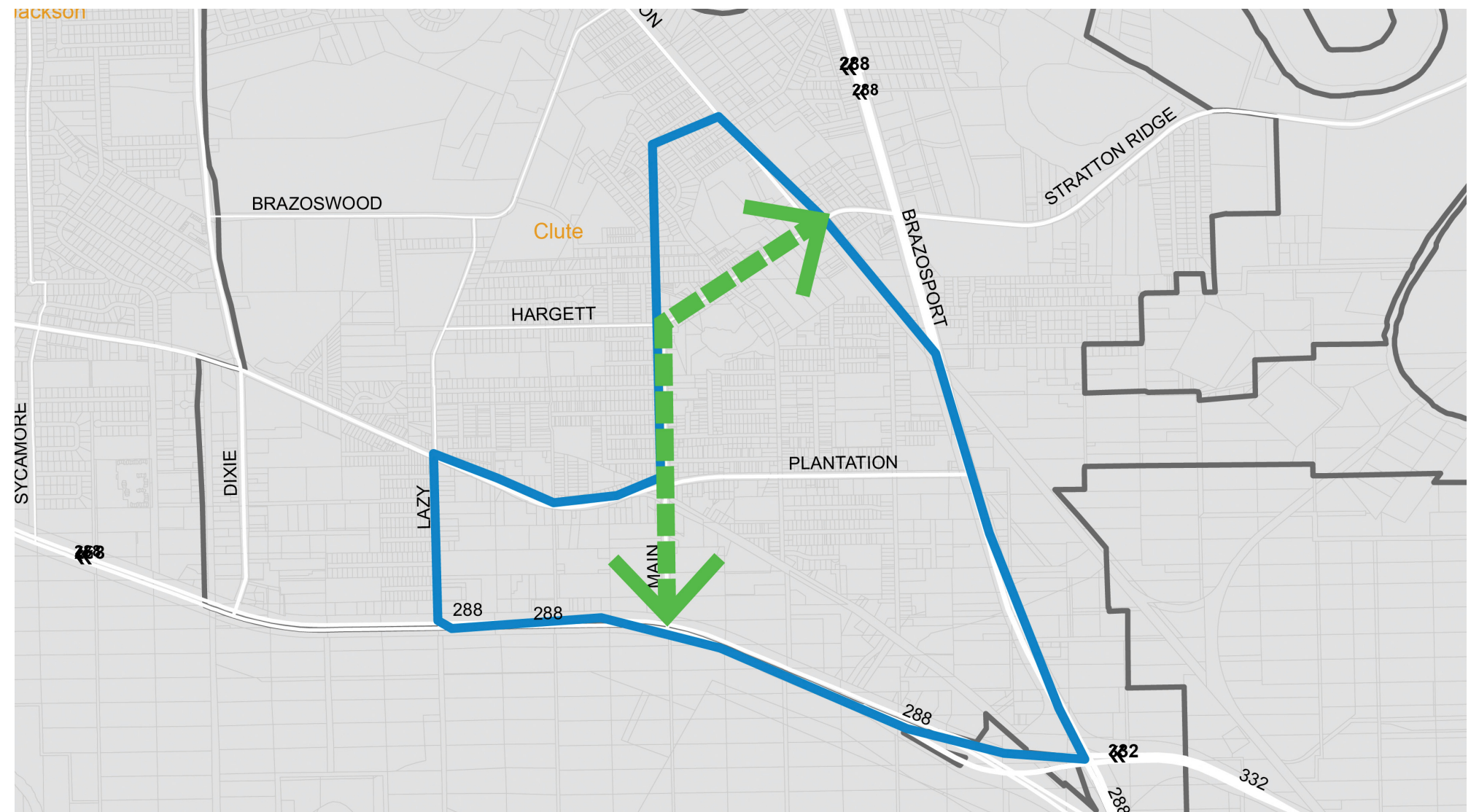
Main Street - South of Plantation

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- It is the Main North - South Thoroughfare through the Study Area
- No street trees
- Overhead power lines create unappealing streetscape
- No bike lanes, protected or otherwise
- Lack of center turn lane creates unsafe traffic flow
- Possible conversion to 3 lane to match Main St. to the north, any remaining space can be used for multi-modal options.
- No existing sidewalks
- No street lighting
- No on-street parking
- Any exposed bar ditches should be converted to curb and gutter and drainage taken underground
- Most existing buildings are setback further than than would be preferred, possible reduction in setback requirements from city code perspective



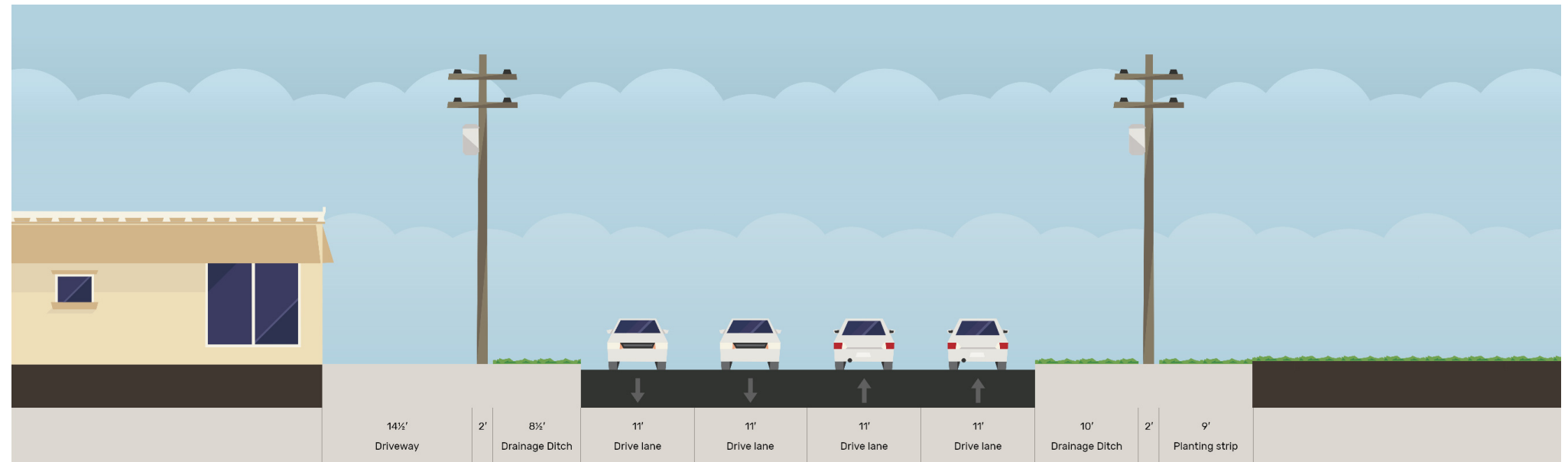
Existing Main Street - South of Plantation



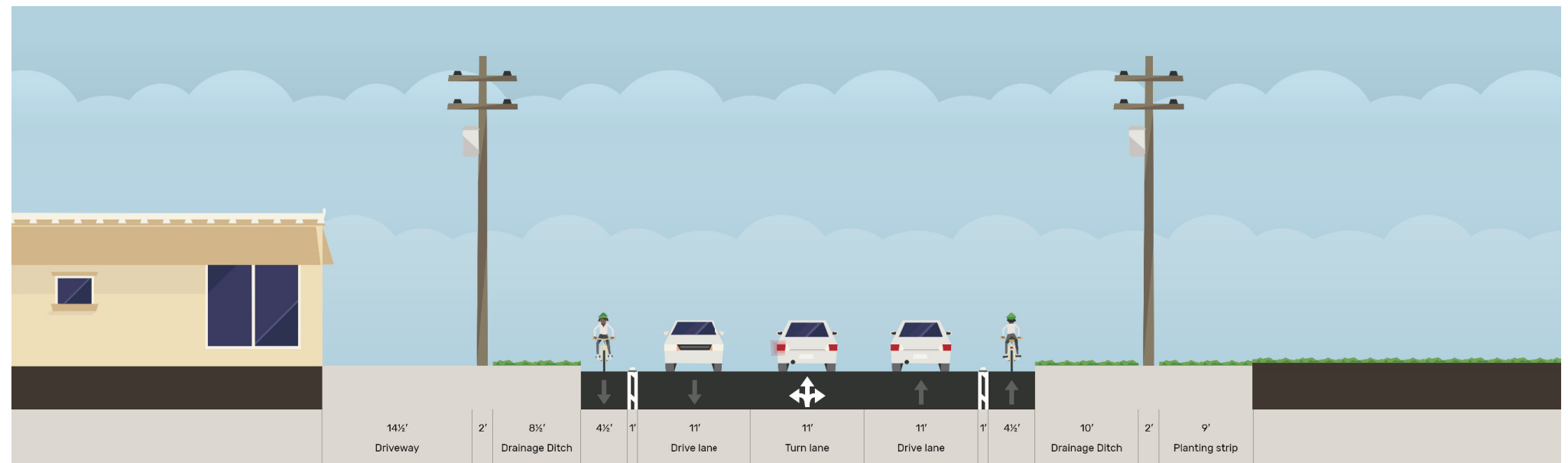
Option 1 looks at reimagining the street as it current exists in its current construction, which primarily centers on restriping the streets to allow for other multi-modal uses:

- Eliminating a travel lane in each direction to be in alignment with Main St. North of Plantation
- Creating a 11-foot-wide turn lane to create a safer traffic situation and eliminating the current condition where the left travel lane is also the turn lane
- Adding bicycle lanes in both directions that are protected by traffic buttons

This should be viewed as an intermediary step to allow some multi-modal access without incurring the hefty expense of rebuilding the entire street.



Existing Main Street - South of Plantation

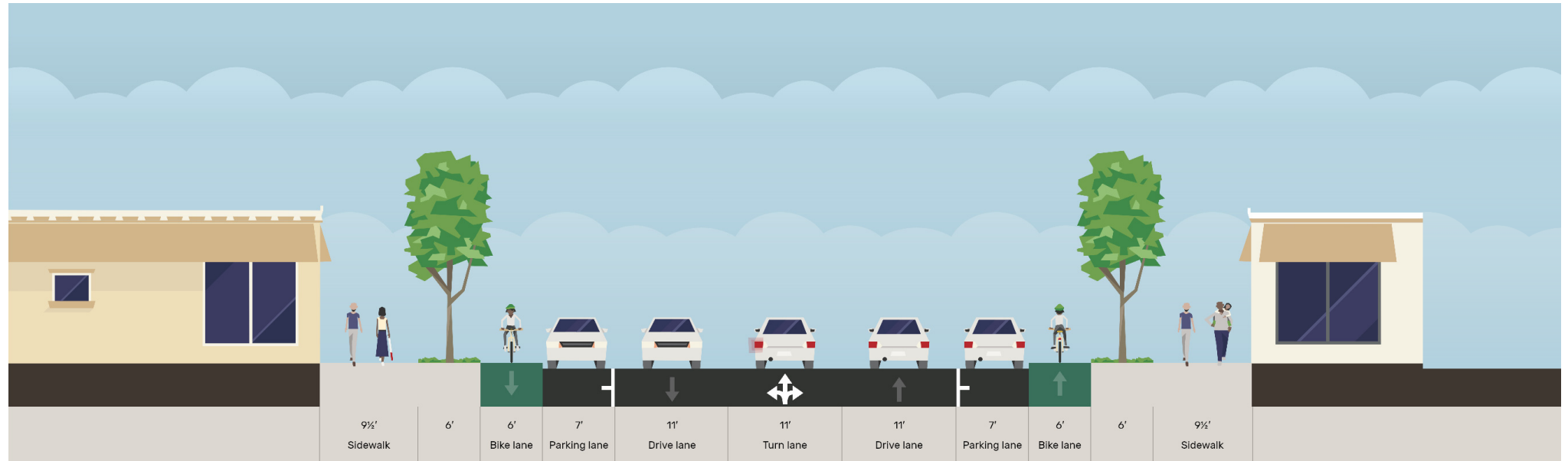


Main Street - South of Plantation Drive - Option 1

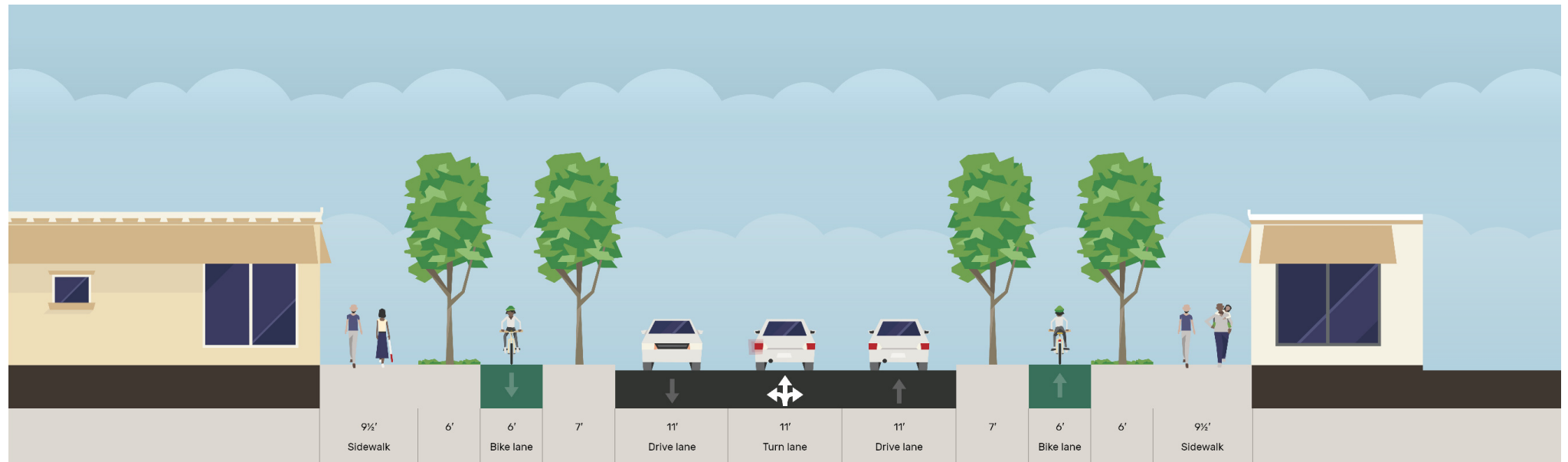
Option 2 looks at possibilities in the existing Right-Of-Way when you completely re-build the street:

- 11-foot-wide travel lanes
- 11-foot-wide turn lane
- 7-foot-wide parallel parking spaces on both sides of the street to provide parking to existing businesses and encourage revitalization of other buildings
- Elevated bike lanes in each direction that are elevated to protect cyclists
- All above ground utilities will be taken under ground to allow for Tree lined streets free of utility conflicts
- Adding curbs and eliminating drainage ditches by providing underground storm drainage
- Wide sidewalks to allow for pedestrians to easily move past one another
- Street Trees on both sides of the street provide shade as well as a pleasant aesthetic character
- Roughly every 3 parallel parking spaces, there will be a planting area with a shade tree instead of a parking space to provide a second row of street trees that will not only provide more shade but will make the street feel more pedestrian friendly and less highway like

This is the full vision for the street and can be implemented in locations that need it most as funds become available.



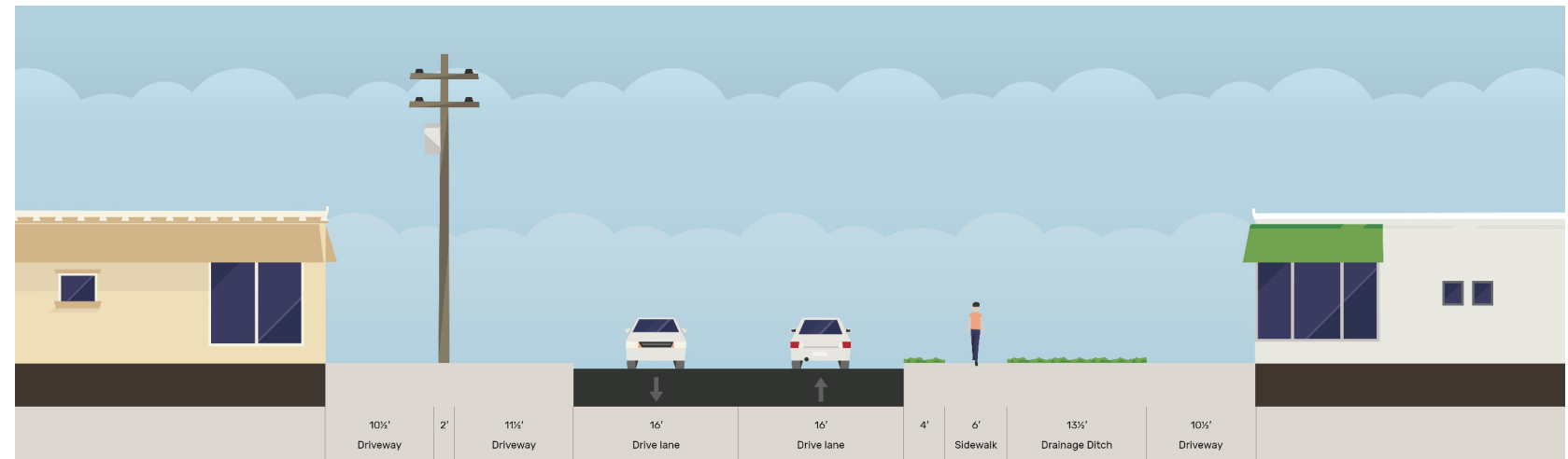
Main Street - South of Plantation Drive - Option 2



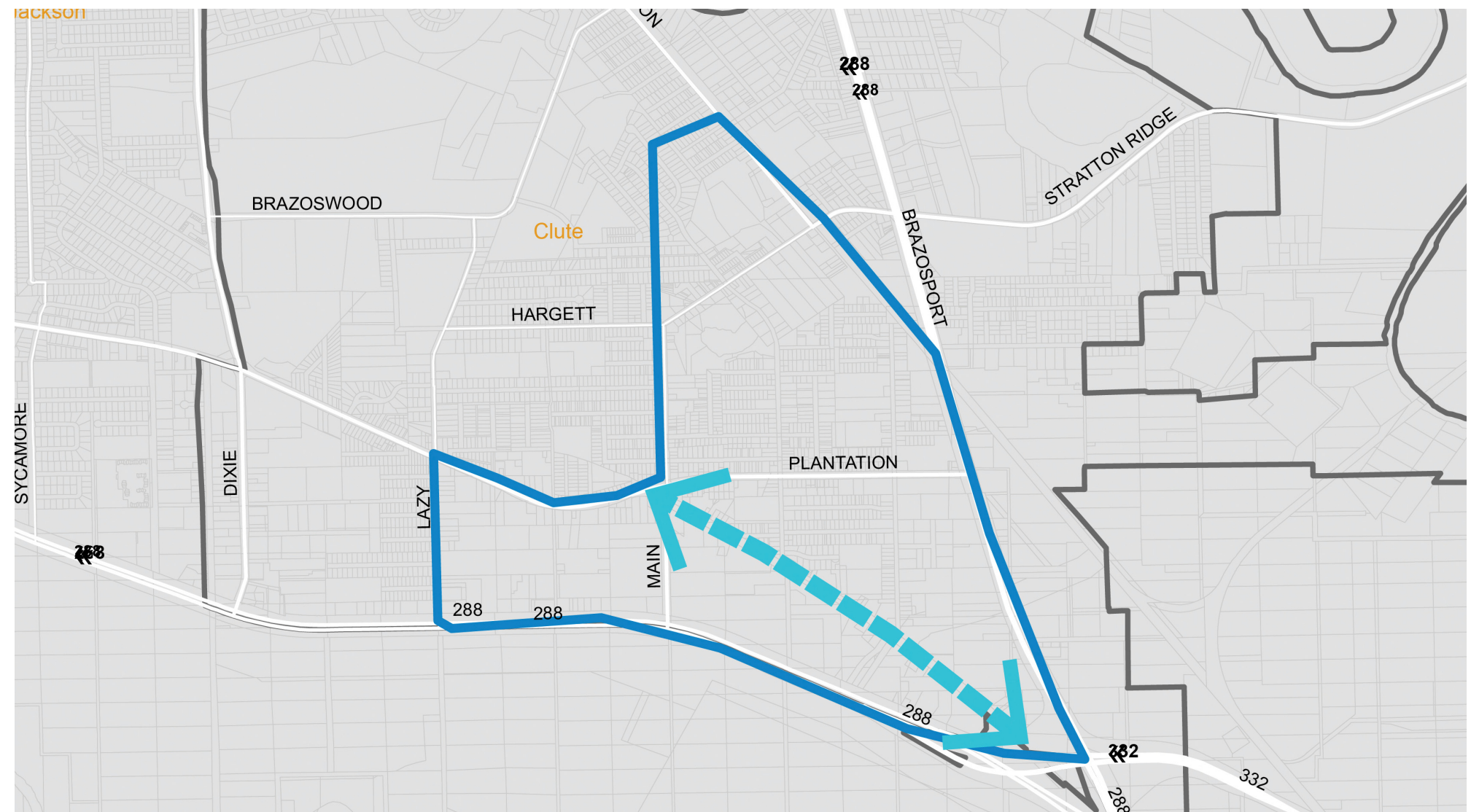
Main Street - South of Plantation Drive - Option 2-1

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Many local employers are located here
- No street trees
- Overhead power lines create unappealing streetscape
- No bike lanes, protected or otherwise
- 16-foot wide travel lanes are much wider than needed, extra space can be used for added multi-modal options
- No existing transit stops
- Some existing sidewalks on one side of street
- No street lighting
- No on-street parking
- Any exposed bar ditches should be converted to curb and gutter and drainage taken underground
- Most existing buildings are setback further than than would be preferred, possible reduction in setback requirements from city code perspective



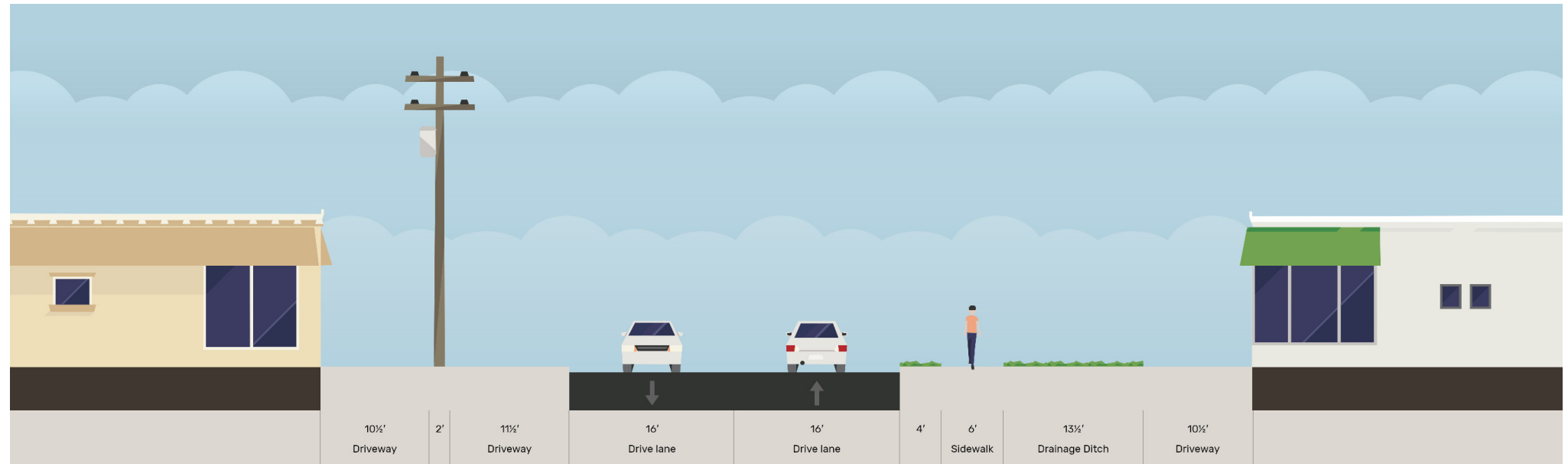
Existing Commerce Street



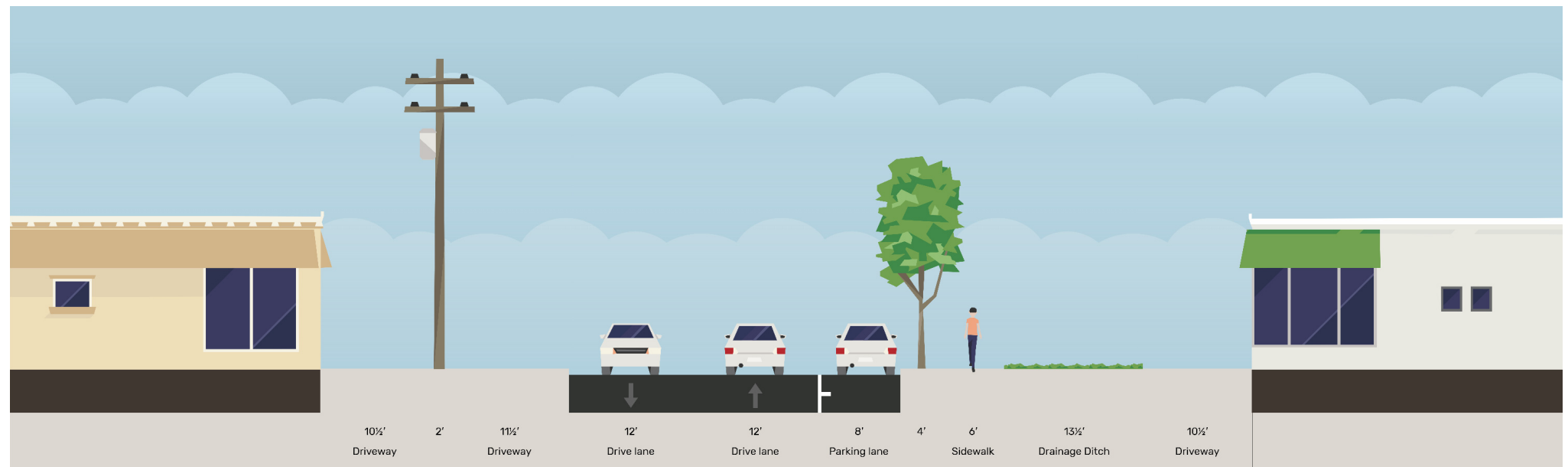
Option 1 looks at reimagining the street as it current exists in its current construction, which focuses on restriping the streets to allow for other multi-modal uses:

- Narrowing travel lanes from 16 feet to 12 feet in width
- Adding an 8-foot-wide parallel parking lane to provide parking for businesses
- Adding street trees on one side of the street for shade and aesthetics

This should be viewed as an intermediary step to improve the street without having to incur the hefty expense of rebuilding the entire street. This does not include a bike lane addition since it was viewed that it was not needed in this area.



Existing Commerce Street

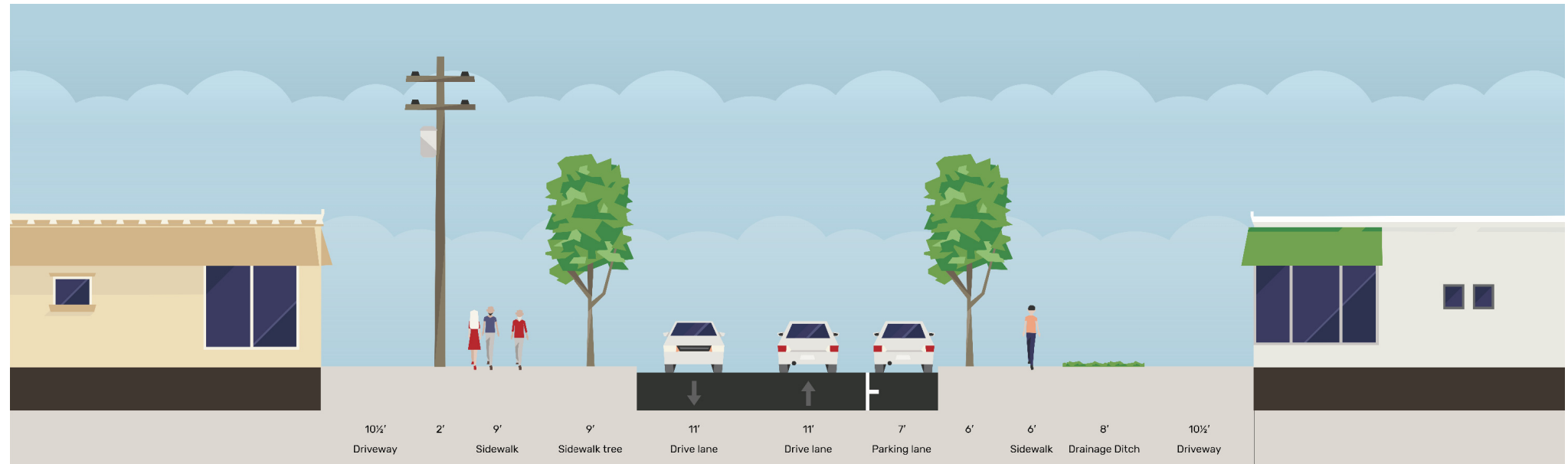


Commerce Street - Option 1

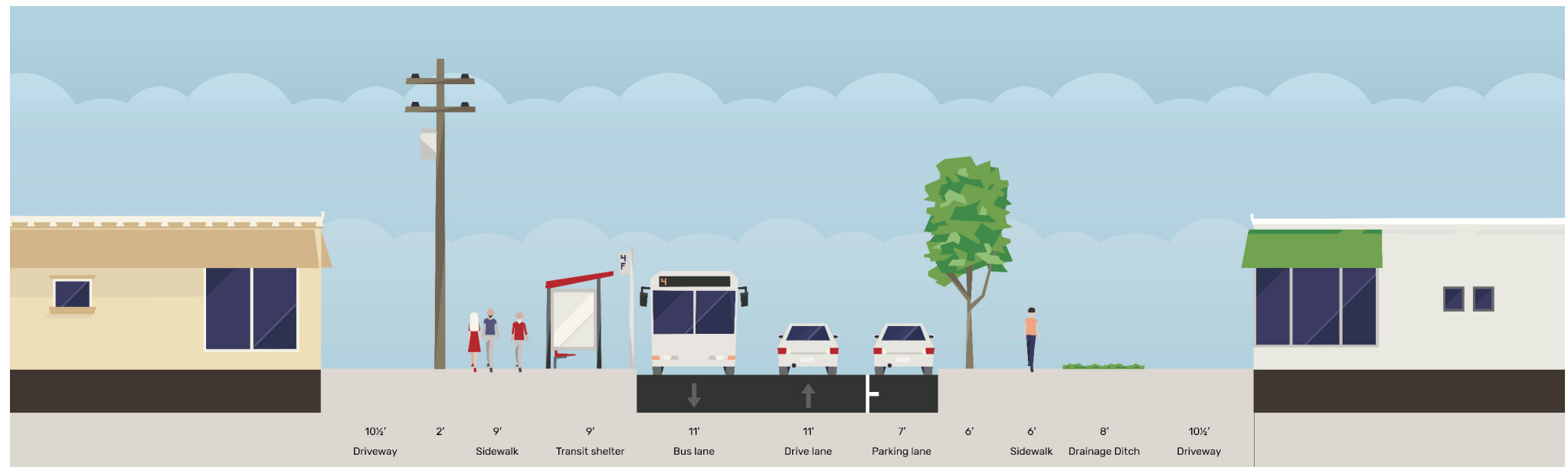
Option 2 looks at what is possible in the existing Right-Of-Way when you completely re-build the street:

- 11-foot-wide travel lanes
- 7-foot-wide parallel parking spaces on one side of the street to provide parking to existing businesses and encourage revitalization of other buildings
- A wider sidewalk on one side of the street that could be used as a shared use path for cyclists if there is a future need
- Adding curbs and eliminating drainage ditches by providing underground storm drainage
- Street Trees on both sides of the street provide shade as well as a pleasant aesthetic character for the street
- Currently there is no transit stops on commerce, we are recommending transit stops be added to Commerce since there are many employers located on this street

This is the full vision for the street and can be implemented in locations that need it most as funds become available.



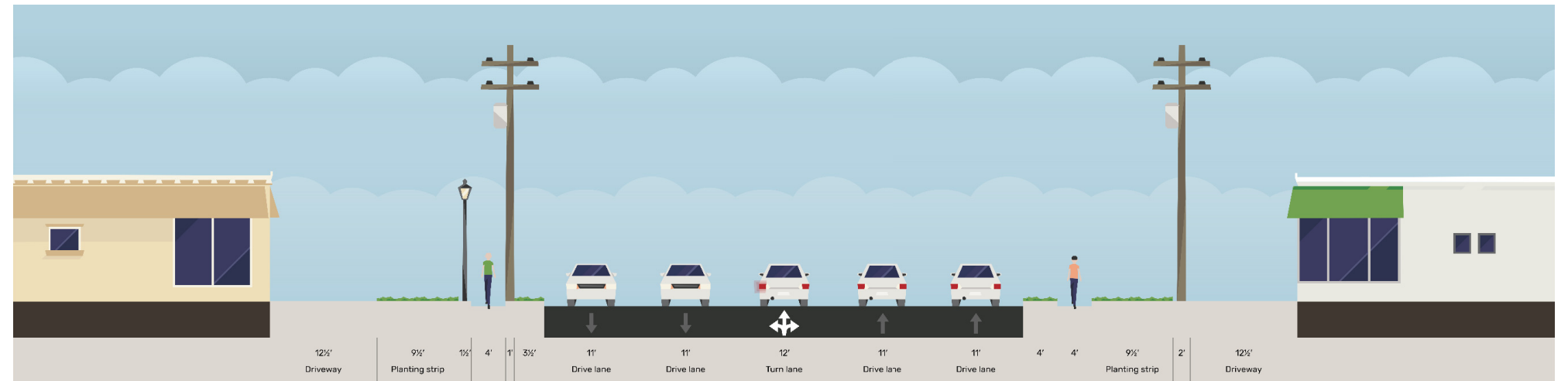
Commerce Street - Option 2



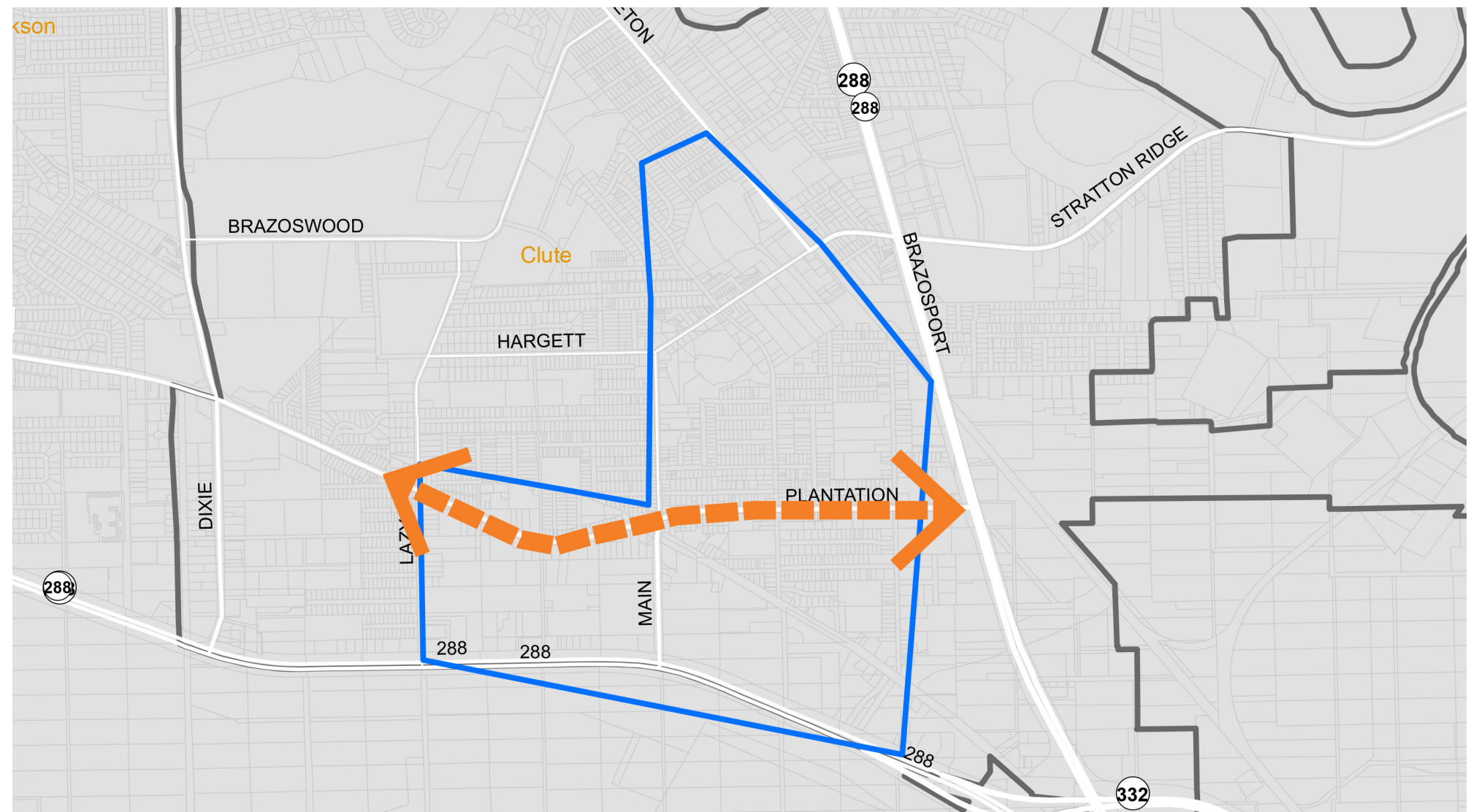
Commerce Street - Option 2-1

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Main East - West Thoroughfare through the Study Area
- Little to no street trees
- Overhead power lines create unappealing streetscape
- No bike lanes, protected or otherwise
- Other sections of Plantation Drive do not have a center turn lane, this needs to be consistent throughout
- Existing network of sidewalks that can be improved upon
- Some street lighting, more is needed
- Existing ROW may be wider than needed
- No On-street Parking
- Possible reduction in travel lanes could present opportunity for multi-modal options
- Most existing buildings are setback further than than would be preferred, possible reduction in setback requirements from city code perspective.



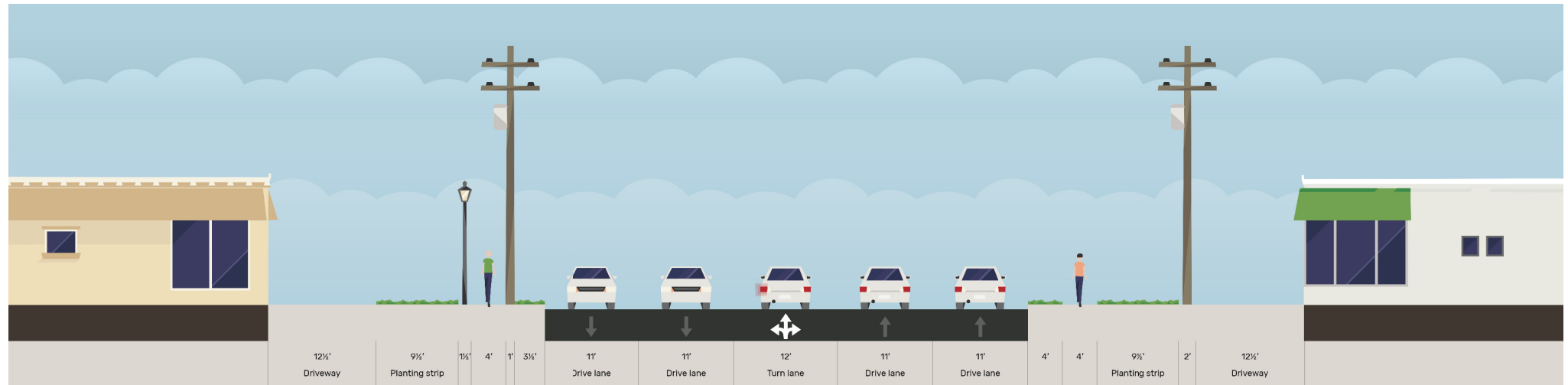
Existing Plantation Drive



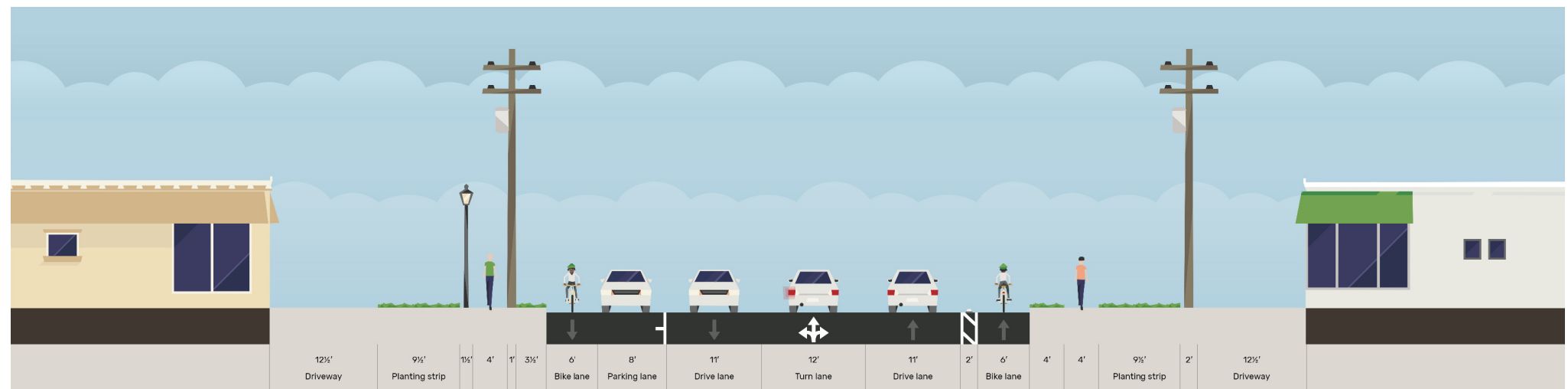
Option 1 looks at reimagining the street as it current exists in its current construction, which focuses on restriping the streets to allow for other multi-modal uses:

- Reducing the travel lanes from 4 to 2 to promote a more pedestrian friendly street and improve safety
- There is no dedicated turn lane west of Main, we recommend having a dedicated turn lane the entire length of the study area to improve safety
- Adding an 8-foot-wide parallel parking space to one side of the street
- Adding bicycle lanes in both directions in which one side is protected by traffic buttons and the other by the parallel parking spaces

This should be viewed as an intermediary step to allow some multi-modal access without having to incur the hefty of expense of rebuilding the entire street.



Existing Plantation Drive

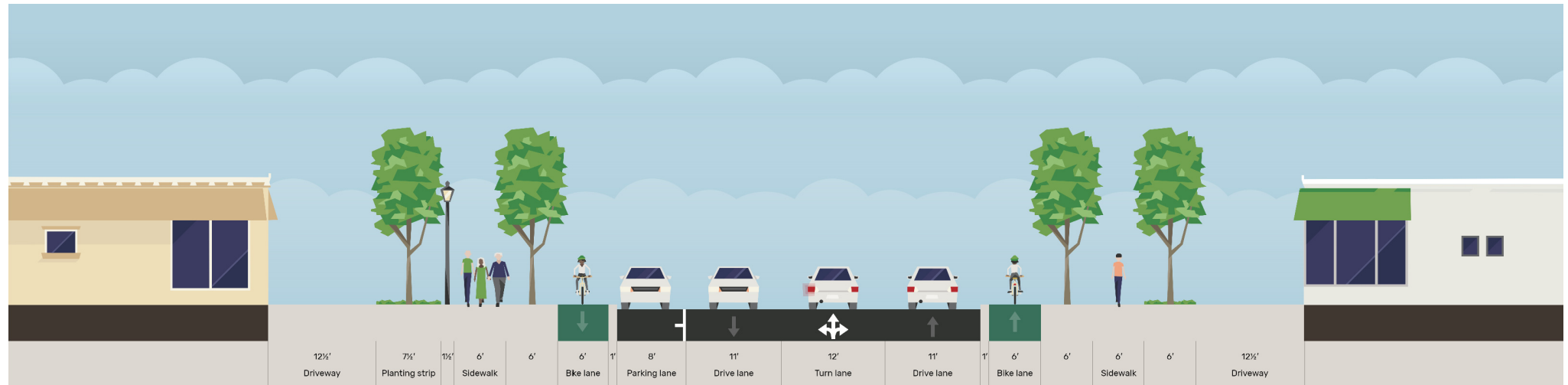


Plantation Drive - Option 1

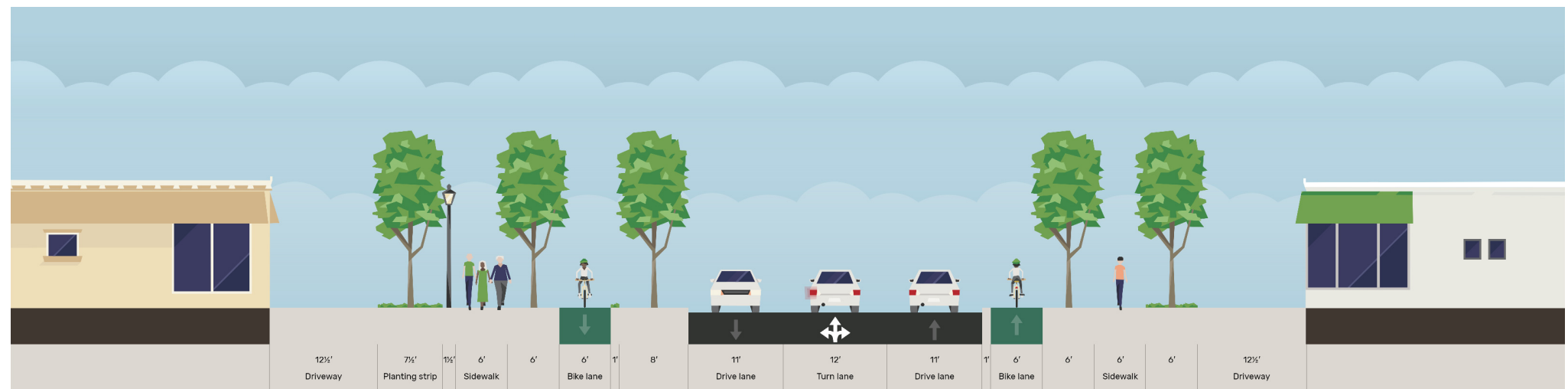
Option 2 looks at what is possible in the existing Right-Of-Way with a completely re-build the street:

- 11-foot-wide travel lanes
- 12-foot-wide turn lane
- 8-foot-wide parallel parking spaces on one side of the street to provide parking to existing businesses and encourage revitalization of other buildings
- Elevated bike lanes in each direction that are elevated to protect cyclists
- All above ground utilities will be taken under ground to allow for Tree lined streets free of utility conflicts
- Wide sidewalks to allow for pedestrians to easily move past one another
- A double row of street trees on both sides of the street provide shade as well as a pleasant aesthetic character
- Roughly every 3 parallel parking spaces, there will be a planting area with a shade tree instead of a parking space to provide a third row of street trees that will provide more shade and make the street more pedestrian friendly and less highway-like

This is the full vision for the street and can be implemented in locations that need it most as funds become available.



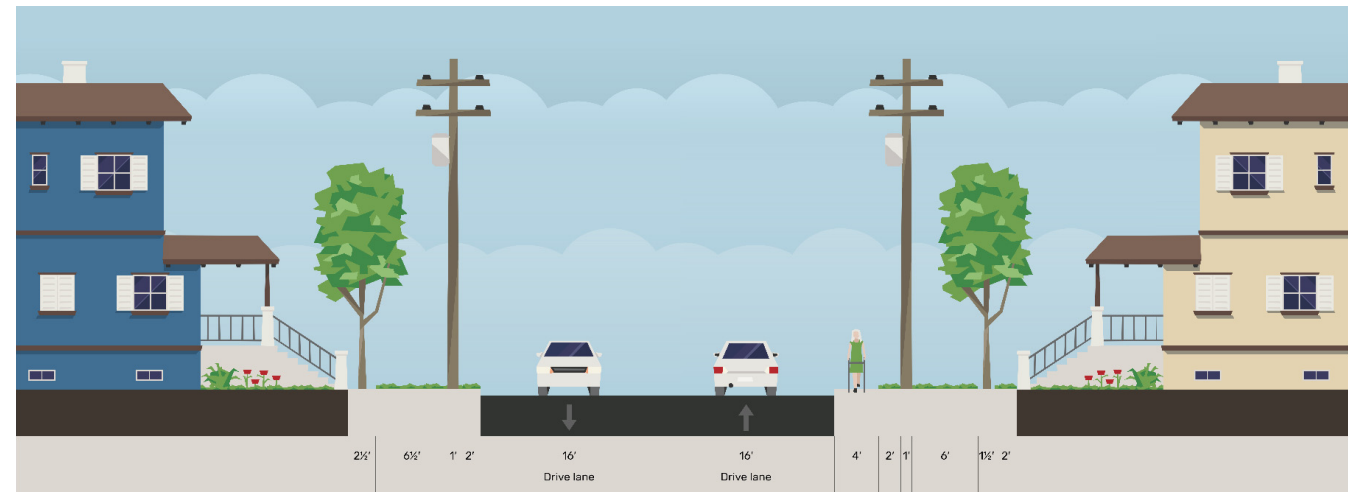
Plantation Drive - Option 2



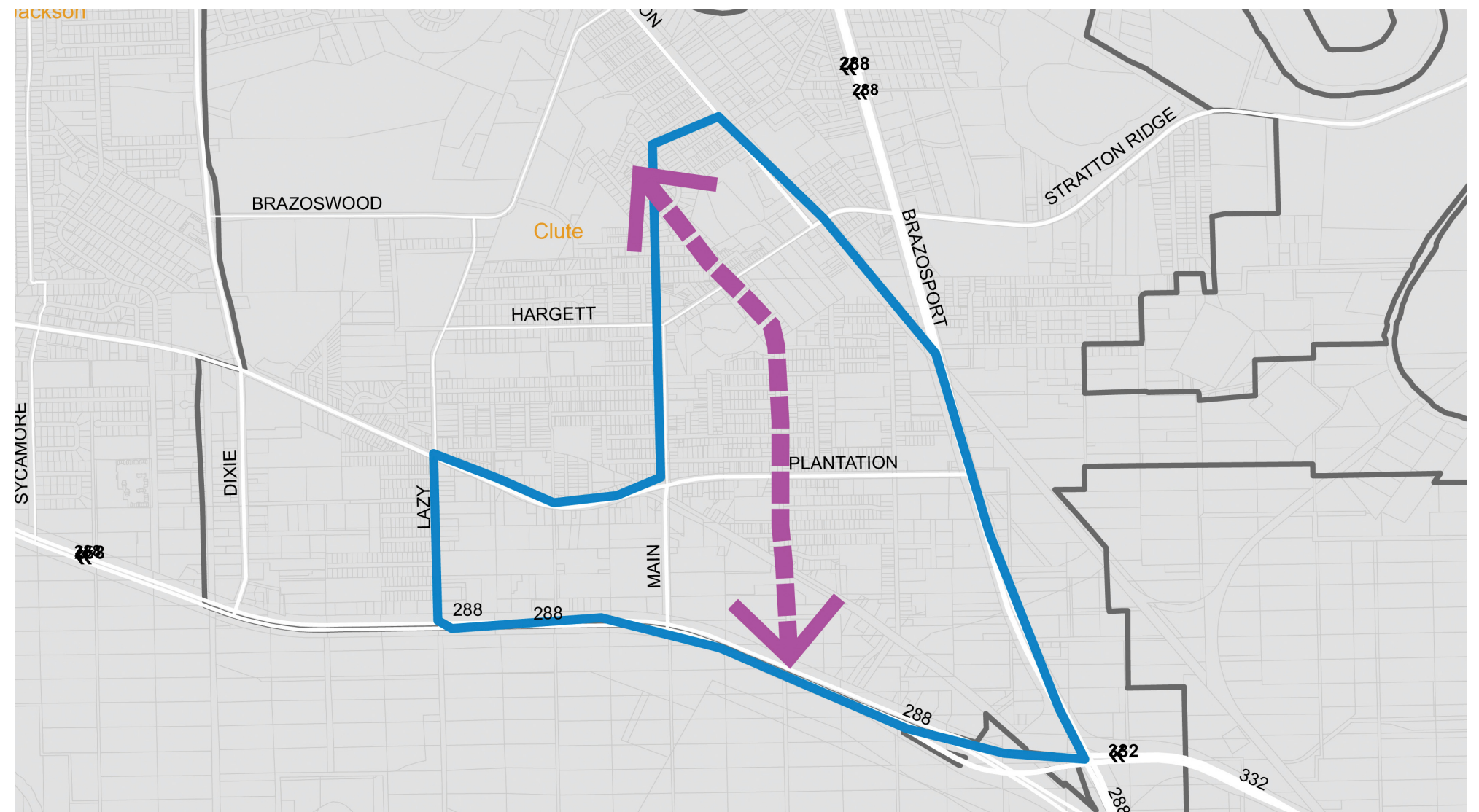
Plantation Drive - Option 2-1

Shanks Road

- Could function as a north - south multi-modal route, that is off of the major thoroughfares
- No On-street Parking, could be used to protect bikeways
- Decent amount of tree cover, any existing trees should be preserved, additional trees should be added
- Some Overhead power lines
- No bike lanes, protected or otherwise
- Walkability potential is very high
- 16-foot wide travel lanes are much wider than needed, extra space can be used for added multi-modal options
- Some existing sidewalks on one side of street, location next to curb is not ideal
- No street lighting



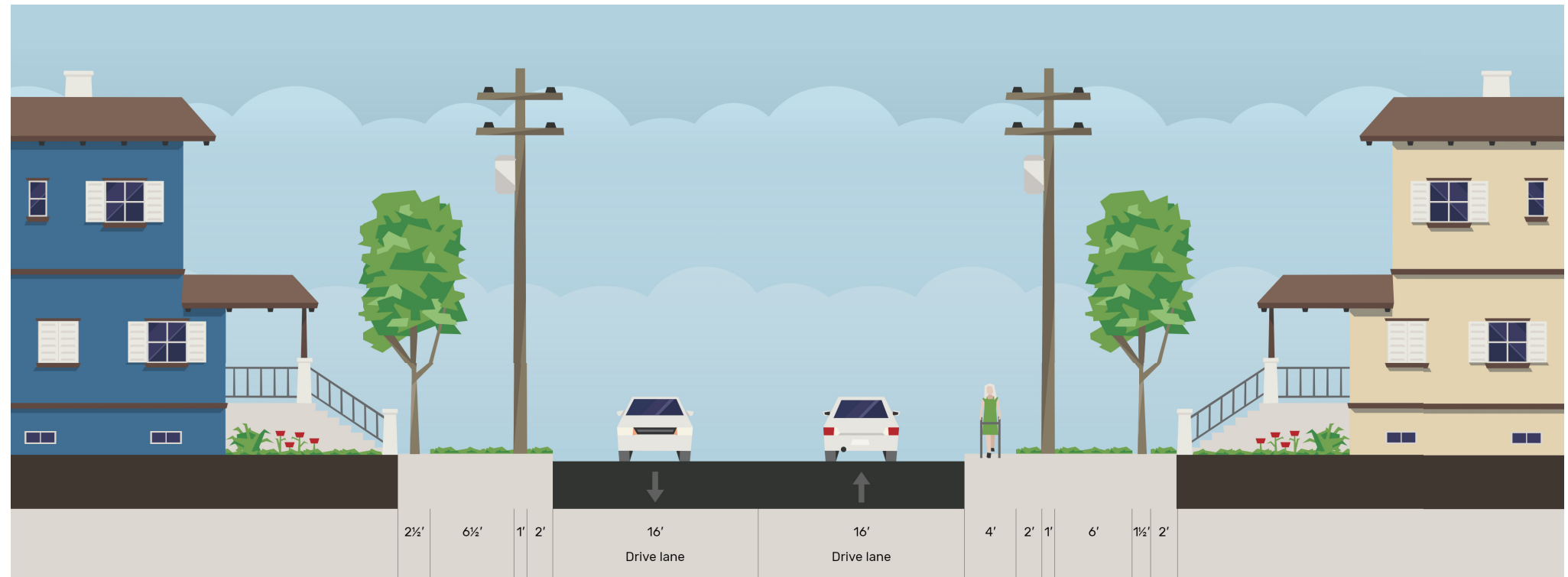
Existing Shanks Road



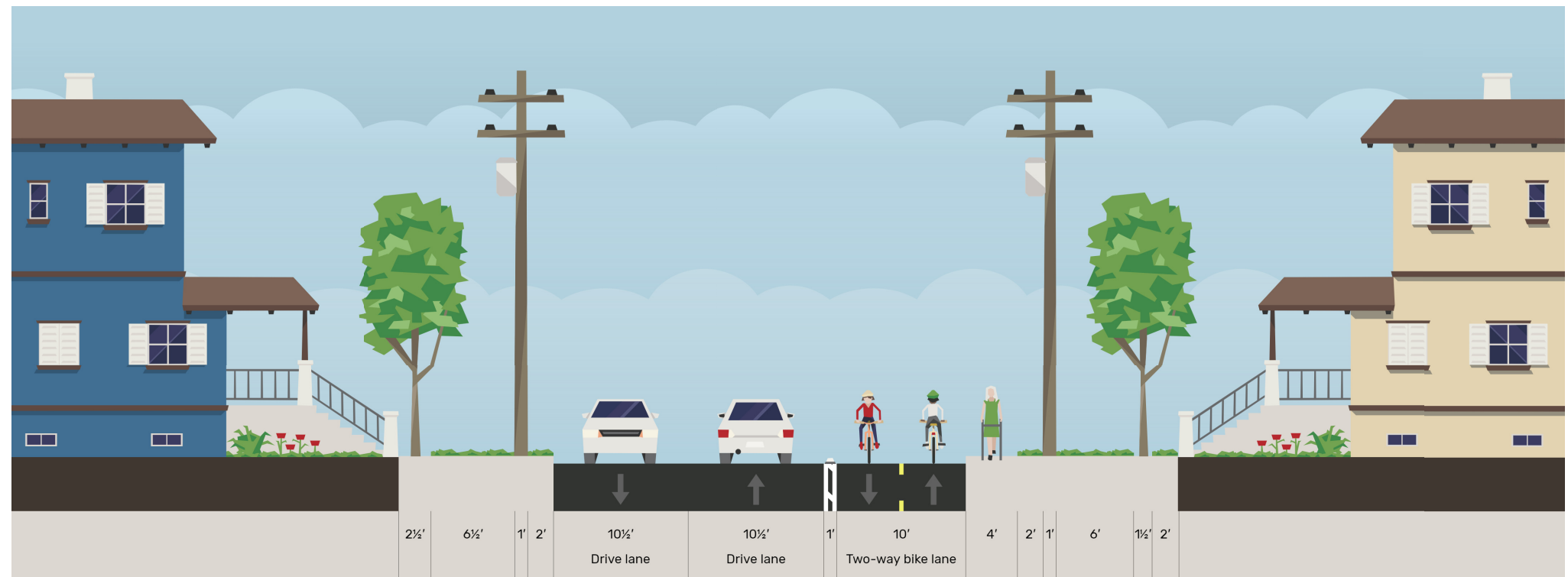
Option 1 looks at reimagining the street as it exists in its current construction, which primarily centers on restriping the streets to allow for other multi-modal uses:

- Reducing travel lane widths to 10.5 feet
- Adding a 2-way bicycle lane in both directions that is protected by traffic buttons

Shanks Rd. would only have a single option since the current traffic would not justify a full street rebuild at this time.



Existing Shanks Road



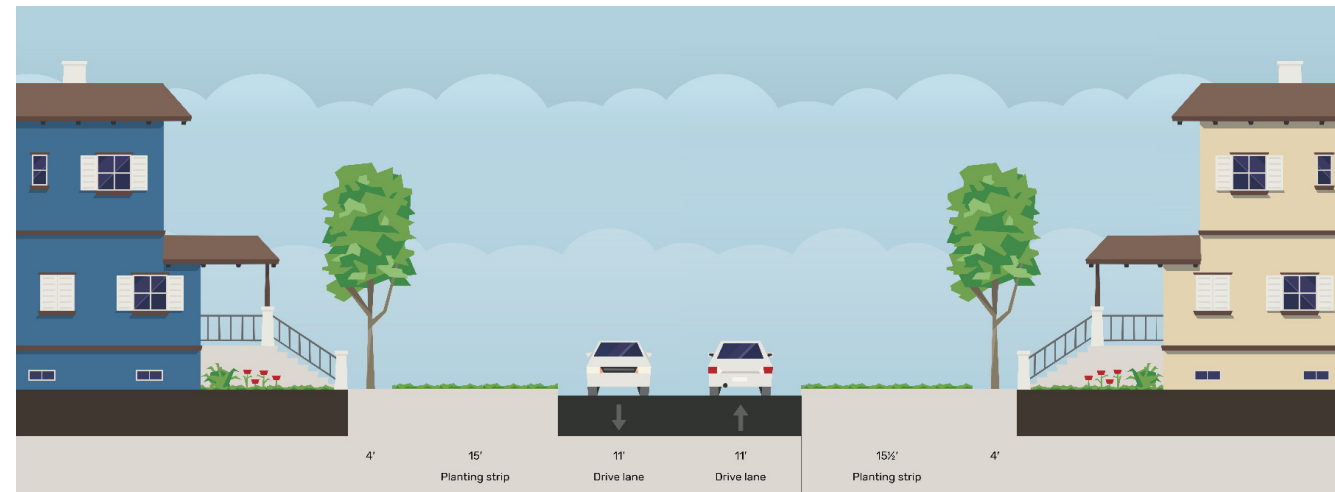
Shanks Road - Option 1

CONNECTIVITY

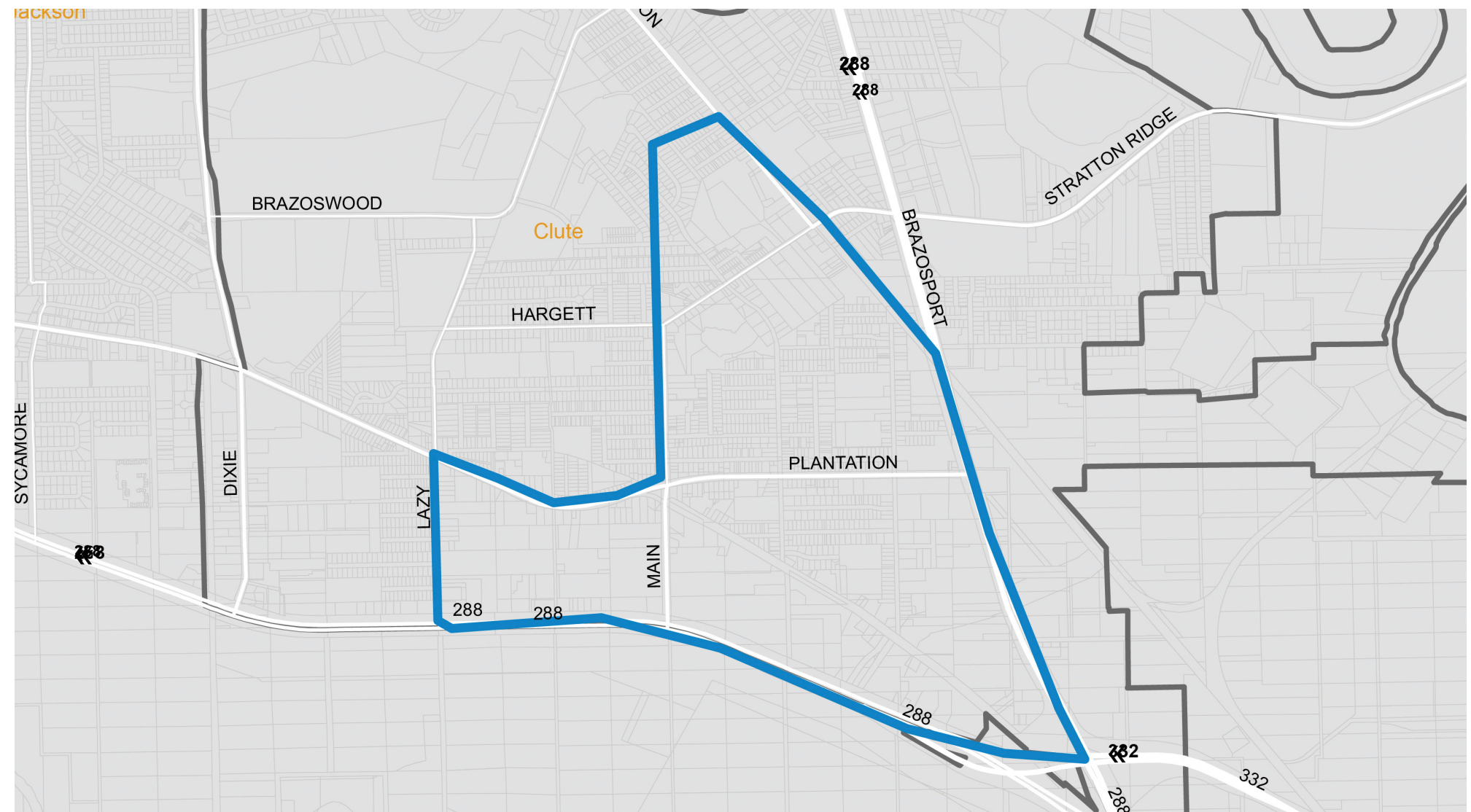
Typical Residential Street

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- No On-street Parking
- Some existing tree cover, though it is pulled back from the street mostly on private property
- Some Overhead power lines
- No bike lanes, protected or otherwise
- No existing sidewalks
- No street lighting
- Any exposed bar ditches should be converted to curb and gutter and drainage taken underground, land could then be used for multi-modal options



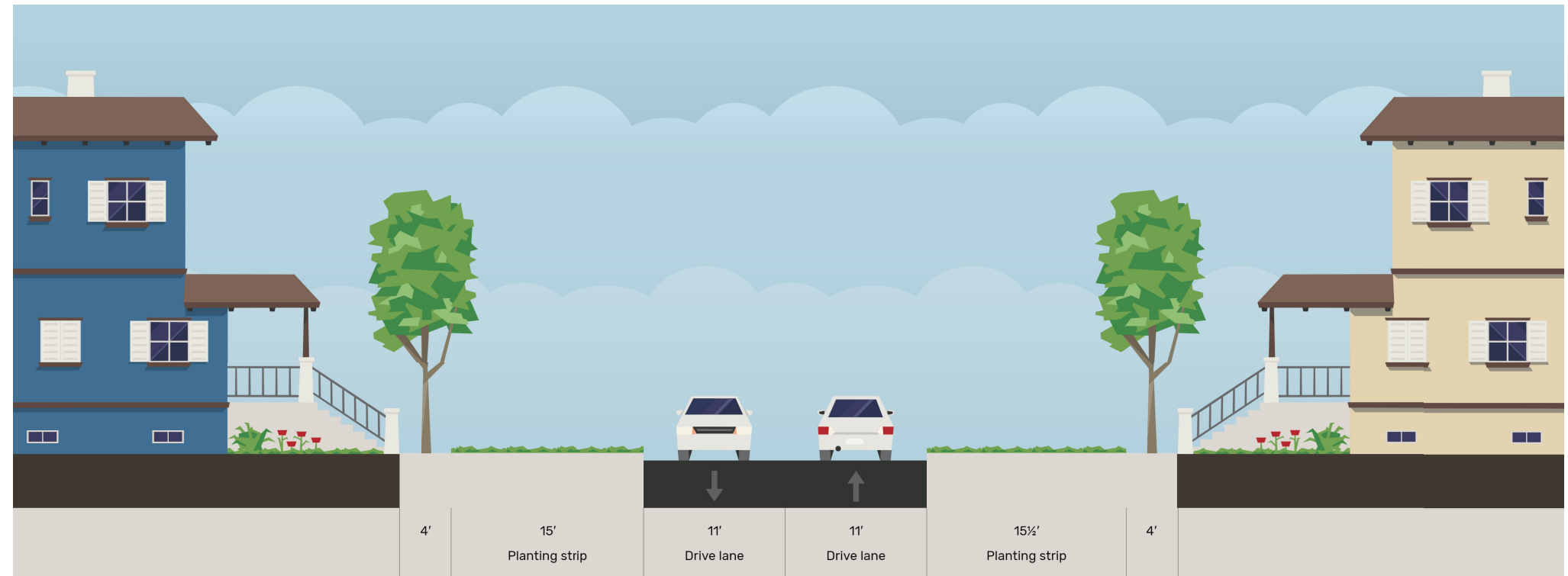
Existing Typical Residential Street



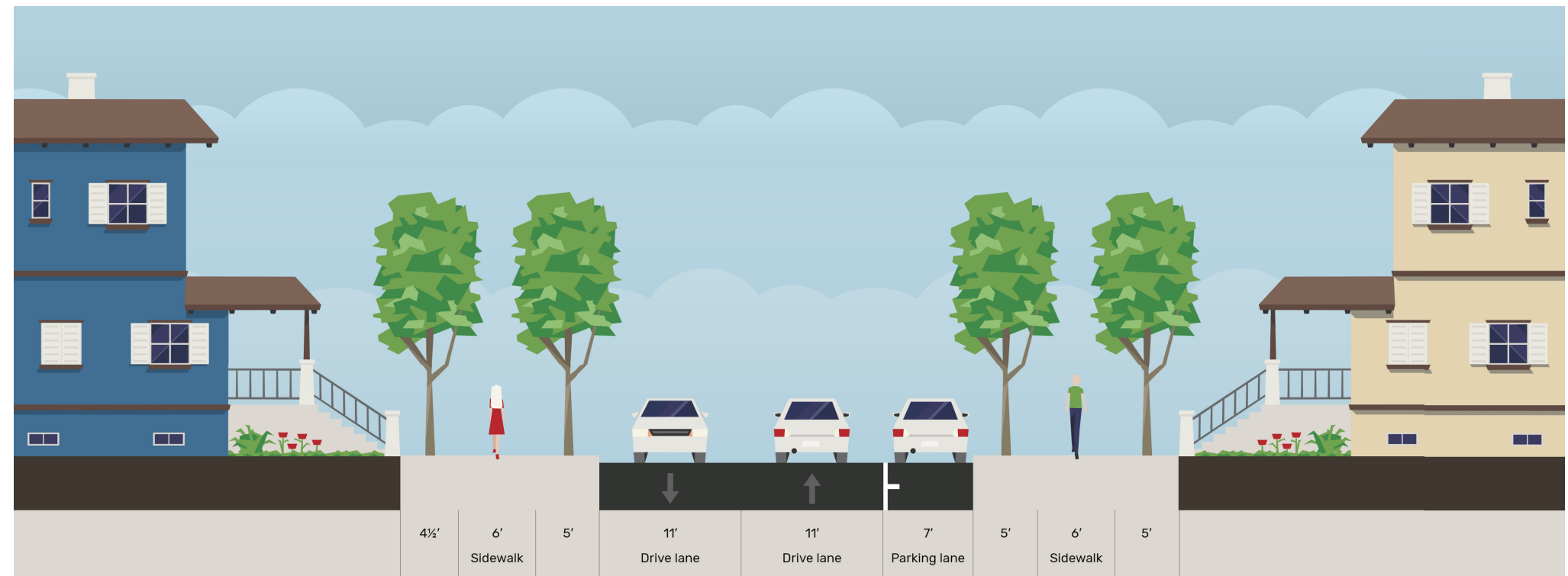
Option 1 for the typical residential streets looks at a complete rebuild of those residential streets:

- Adding curbs and eliminating drainage ditches by providing underground storm drainage, which will allow a large amount of useable Right-of-Way
- 11-foot travel lanes
- Adding a 7-foot-wide parallel parking lane to one side of the street that can vary on which side of the street it occurs
- Adding sidewalks to both sides of the street that will allow residents to walk to other areas in their neighborhood which is challenging currently due to lack of sidewalks
- Adding street trees to each side of the street to provide shade as well as providing that tree lined street aesthetic that many residential streets strive to achieve

These improvements would be implemented to residential streets slowly over time to residential streets throughout the study area as funding becomes available.



Existing Typical Residential Street



Typical Residential Street - Option 1

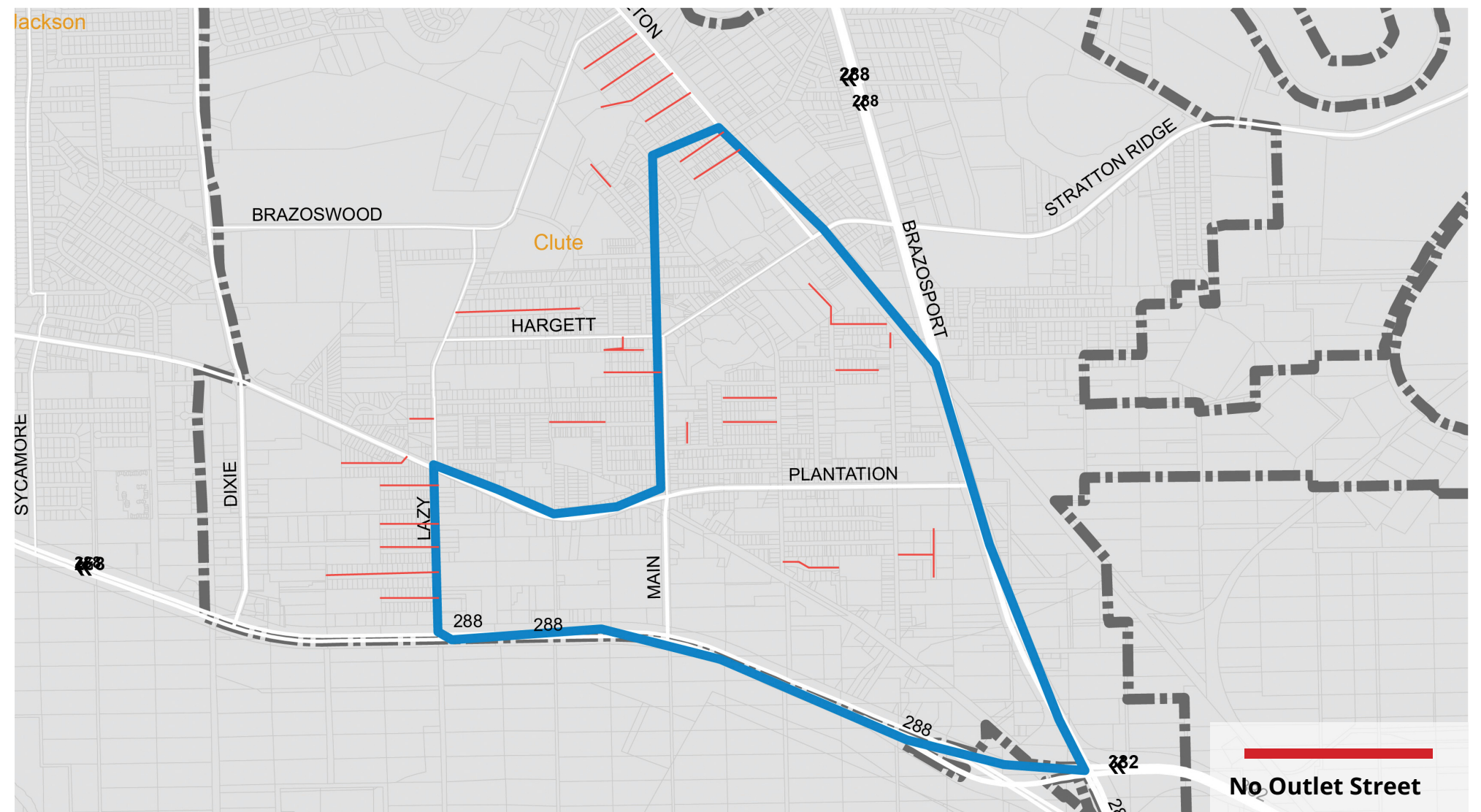
CONNECTIVITY

No Outlet Streets

As this page shows there are very many no outlet streets within and bordering the study area. Most of the streets are residential. They lack adequate turnarounds which can be detrimental services. Also no outlet streets do not promote connectivity since those streets become isolated from the other neighbors, they also detract from the sense of place / community. They also make navigating the study area very challenging for anyone that has not lived in the area for several years.

Remedying these no outlet streets from a vehicular standpoint is challenging since there are existing structures at the terminus, though there may be ways to create pedestrian easements so that residents are connected to their neighbors.

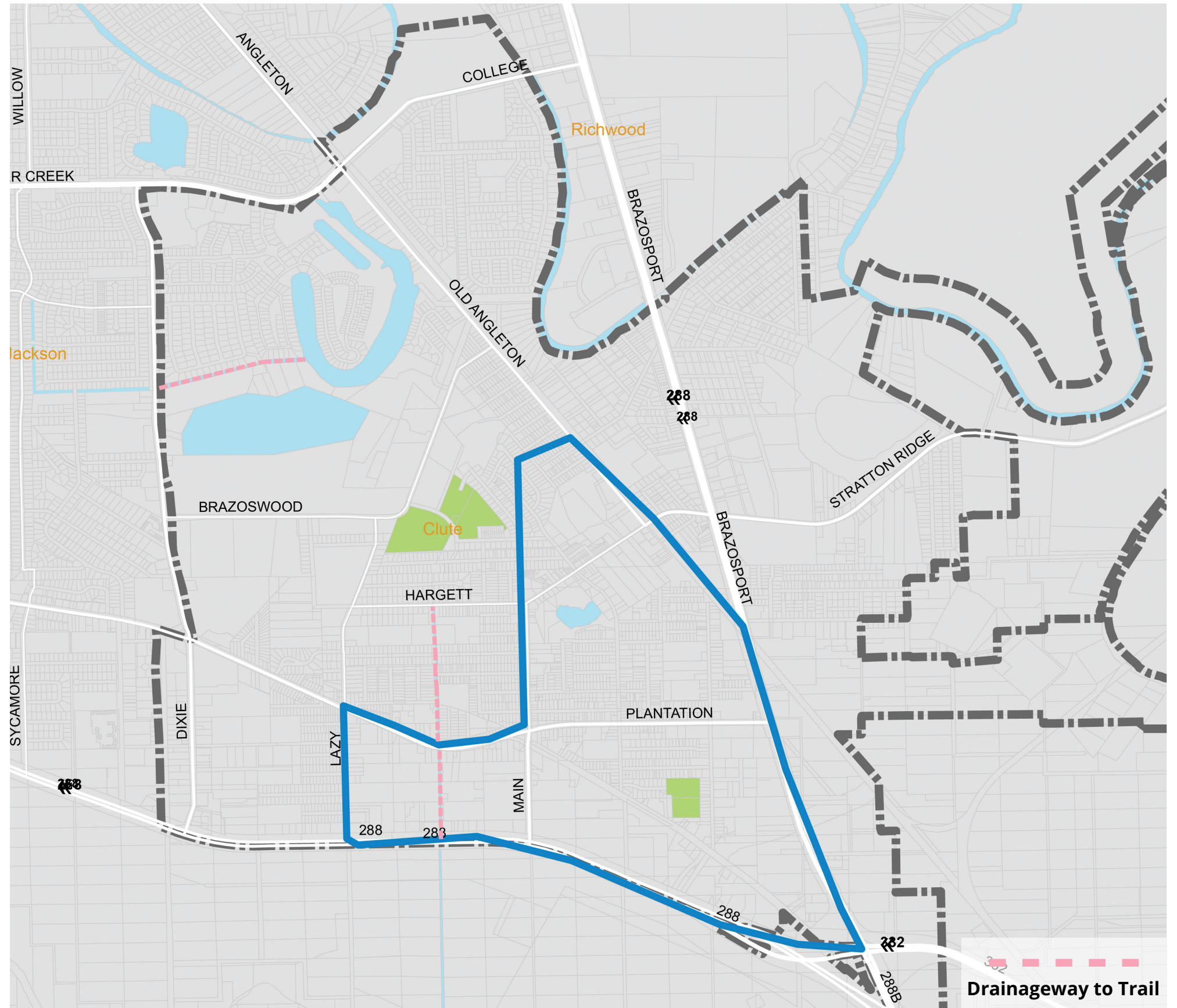
Most contain bar ditches for drainage, these could be taken underground to allow for sidewalks and on street parking.



CONNECTIVITY

Drainageways to Trails

There are 2 drainage channels in Clute, one in the study area and one outside of the study area. Currently these are underutilized areas that only exist to move storm water throughout the City. However, they present a unique opportunity to reclaim that area as usable space. Converting those surface concrete drainage channels to underground concrete drainage pipes creates areas that can then be utilized for trails. Those trails will provide off-street pathways to connect neighborhoods to streets with recommended multi-modal improvements. This will allow residents to use these trails by either walking or cycling. Underground drainage performs better than the current structure.

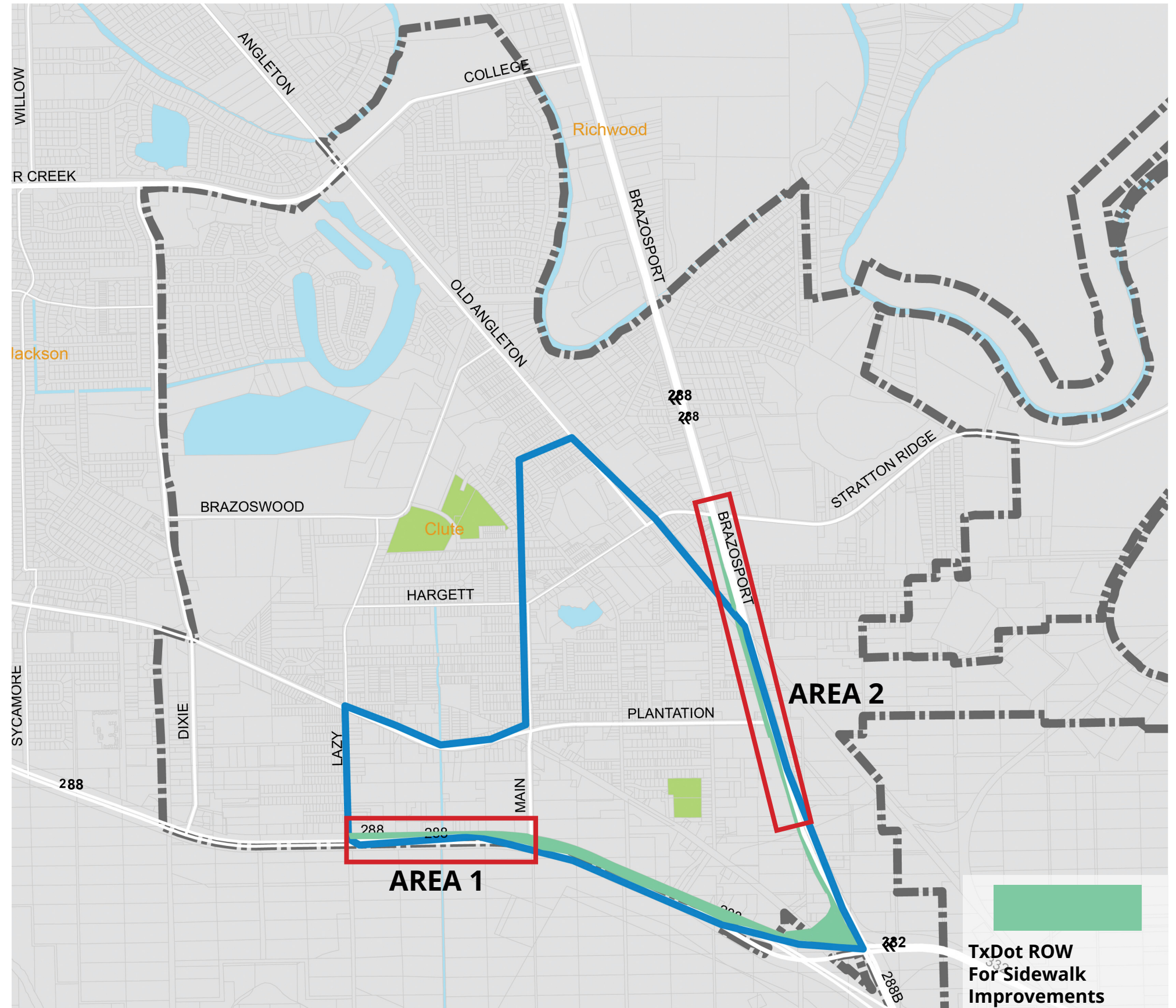


The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has right-of-way (ROW) along the eastern boundary of the study area at Brazasport Parkway and at the southern study area boundary of US 288. There is great need for sidewalks in this ROW to provide safe pedestrian access along these roadways.

The areas highlighted have the highest need.

Area 1 - it is common for pedestrians to walk from the hotels along 288 frontage to businesses and restaurants to the west of the hotel area. Currently, there is no sidewalk and no safe path. Pedestrians walk in the grass area, which is challenging to navigate and is unsafe. The addition of a sidewalk in the ROW of the 288 frontage between Main and Dixie Lane would address this highest priority need. The TxDOT team members have identified potential funding sources to design and construct sidewalks like this one.

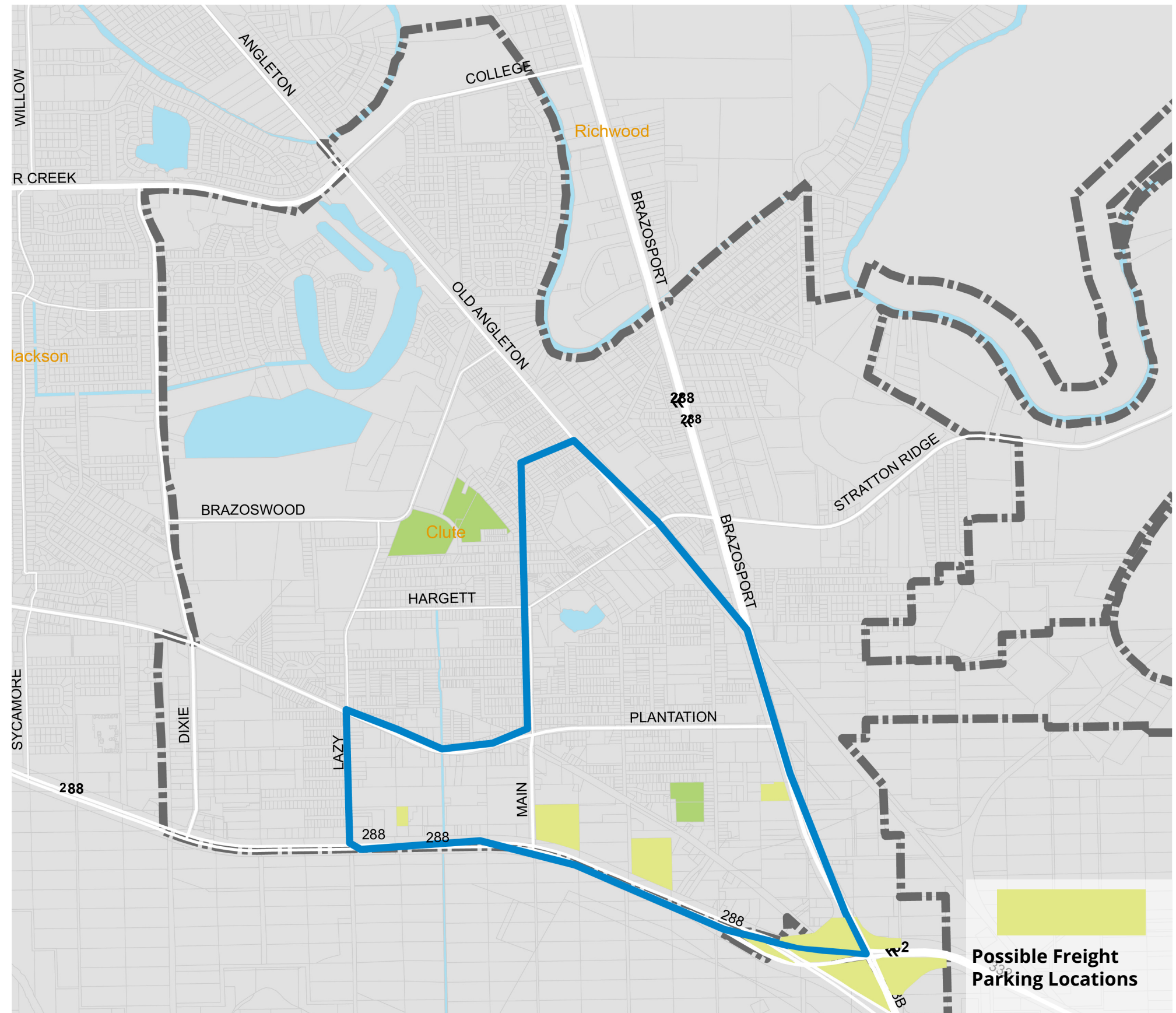
Area 2 - pedestrians frequently walk along Brazasport Parkway where there are no sidewalks. The area between Main and the Brazoria County Dream Center on the western side of Brazasport Parkway has been identified as the second-highest area of need for sidewalks in the TxDOT ROW. A sidewalk here would drastically increase pedestrian safety.



Due to the low cost of living and its proximity to the BASF plant and other heavy freight industries, Clute is a hub for freight companies and individual owner-operated freight vehicles. Despite having an ordinance to prevent it, in the City currently, freight carriers and trucks park for extended periods of time along public streets in the study area, as there are no designated parking areas for vehicles of this size. This poses several problems:

1. Large trucks spill out of driveways and are parked on narrow streets or busy collectors, contributing to congestion. This is true for both freight haulers who live in Clute and park their rigs when not in use, and for visiting haulers making deliveries or stopping in the Study Area for meals and breaks.
2. Large trucks parked in inappropriate places can impinge on sight corridors and contribute to safety concerns.
3. Large trucks in neighborhoods and parked randomly along City streets contribute to visual clutter and make both visibility and placemaking more challenging.

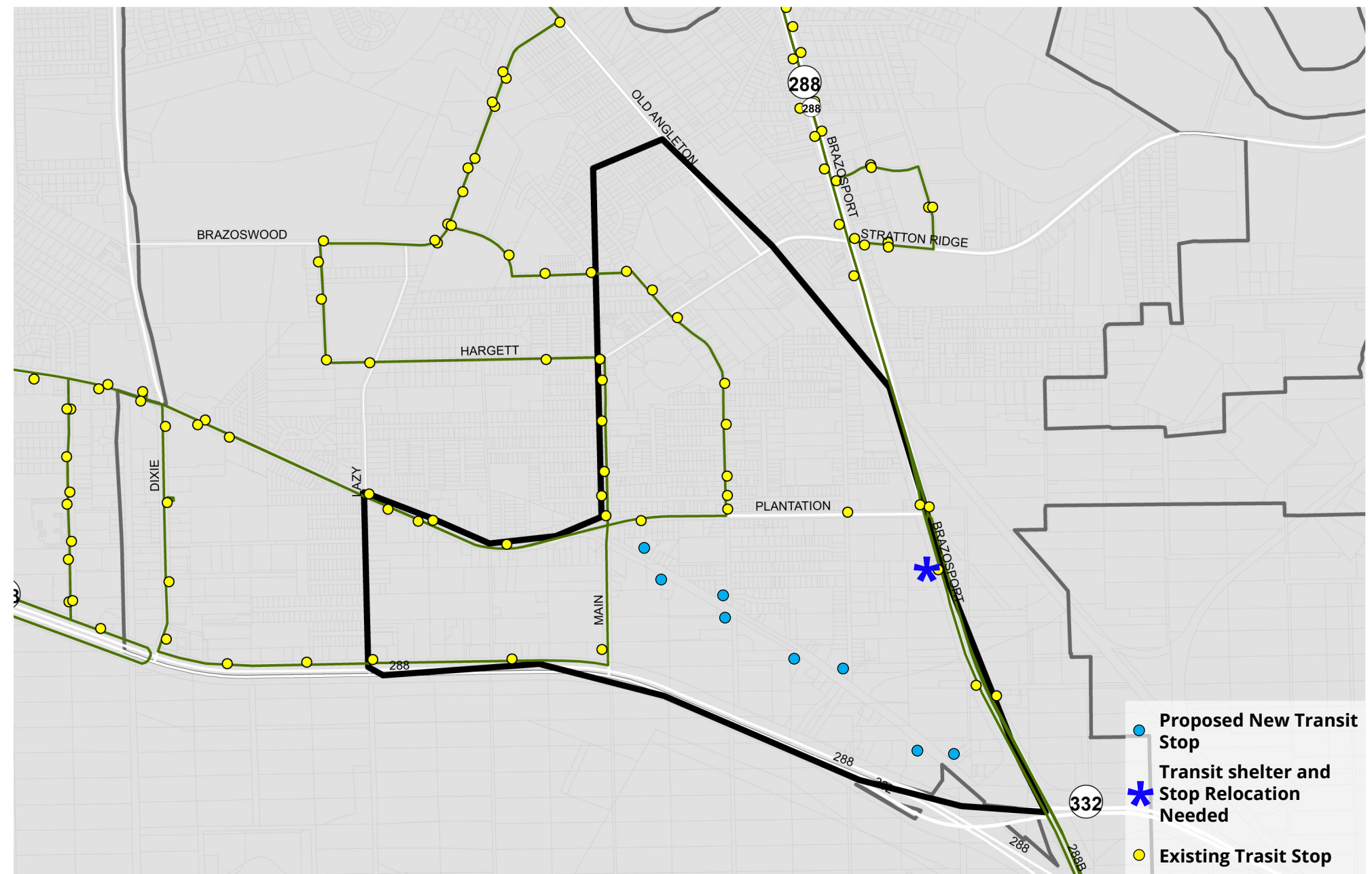
This graphic identifies several areas that, while privately owned, could be turned into freight parking via a ground lease of those properties. The creation of a freight parking area would provide a centrally located area for freight parking, thus removing trucks from city streets throughout Clute. A designated truck parking area or areas, planned, landscaped, with good access and security, would benefit truckers and freight service, improve the visual aesthetic, and improve safety and traffic flow. TXDOT has funding avenues available to assist the city with the design and construction of freight parking areas.



Clute is a part of the Gulf Coast Transit District and, as such, is served but the agency's regional and local transit routes. Clute is fairly well served by these transit routes, but, like any system, there is room for improvement. Commerce Street currently has no transit service. Employees of Commerce Street businesses would benefit from access to public transit, becoming less dependent on their personal vehicles. This plan suggests locations for stops along Commerce. These suggestions need further study by the Transit Authority to evaluate efficiency and feasibility.

Currently, Brazosport Boulevard is only serviced by a regional transit route. This study would recommend that Brazosport Boulevard be incorporated into a local route to provide Clute residents with transit access to those locations along Brazosport.

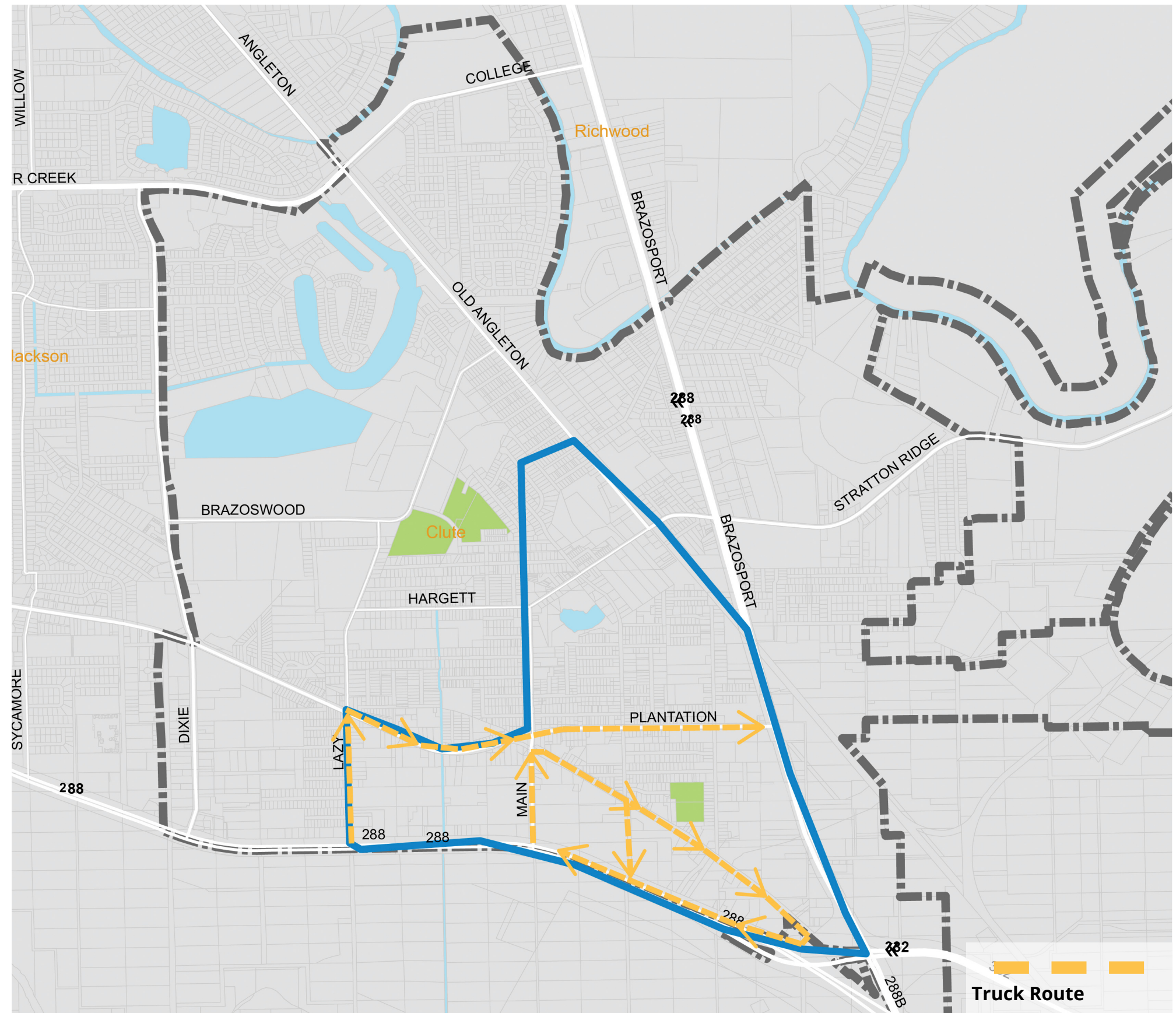
The Brazoria County Dream Center could be better served. The current regional transit stop at its Brazosport frontage does not have a transit shelter, and the proximity to the road creates an unsafe situation for those waiting on transit. This study recommends that the transit stop be located in the Dream Center parking lot and a transit shelter be provided to protect users during inclement weather. The Transit Authority has done this at other locations.



To support the creation of a pedestrian friendly zone, in the Town Center, there is a need to create a truck free zone. This will greatly increase the pedestrian safety. With an area between Plantation and the NE Commerce alignment becoming off limits to trucks, there is a need for an alternate route to provide access to Commerce businesses as this graphic indicates.

In the proposed route, trucks travel north on Main from 288 and take a right onto the new Commerce alignment.

To accommodate the wide turning needs of the trucks, the radius of the right turn will be generous and engineered to allow the trucks to make an easy right turn onto Commerce. Those trucks can then access all business along Commerce, and can either return to 288 from Frontage via a right turn out of Shanks Road, or go all the way down Commerce until it ends at the Frontage Road. This will create a more efficient truck route, preserving the Town Center as a pedestrian-friendly area.





PLACEMAKING

Placemaking is a multi-pronged approach to the planning, design, and development of public spaces. It takes a holistic look at the community in terms of its assets and identifies areas in the community where public space is needed and can be successful.

One thing that was apparent early on in the study process was that Clute didn't have that historic center or central gathering space that one usually sees in well-established communities. That observation led to locating and creating those areas through placemaking. Recent development in Clute has mainly focused on the northern part of the city where there was open land developed into single family housing and added areas of retail, while the geographic and historic center have had little in the way of new development and lacks a sense of place. The public input process revealed that people want more places to go and more activities, such as restaurants, more retail, and open space.

As was outlined regarding connectivity, more options for people to be able to move throughout their community can have a dramatic positive impact on the community residents. However, people need places to go nearby. Otherwise, the improvements to connectivity become nice editions but are not as successful as they could be when all of the places people go are too far away from their homes. Therefore placemaking is an integral part of the Livable Centers process to provide a destination for any connectivity recommendations.

Placemaking can help communities establish their community identity and strengthen the community's cultural fabric. These places can be where residents engage with one another, promoting a more inclusive community with stronger social connections.

There also numerous economic incentives for cities to invest in placemaking. Typically, areas that are looked at for placemaking are lacking in identity and are not performing economically as well as they could be. They are also undervalued properties in terms of valuation. So by investing in placemaking and making improvements to those areas, they will then become better performing and thus perform better and obtain a higher value, creating a good return on investment from the City's perspective.

As the process evolved, two central areas were identified as great locations for placemaking. The first location is at the intersection of Plantation and Main, presenting a tremendous opportunity in terms of location at the intersection of two major thoroughfares. The second area is the area around Shanks (Clute) Lake. Shanks Lake is beautiful and incredible natural amenity but it is mostly inaccessible as both the lake and the property surrounding it are privately owned. We have developed a phased process over time to implement placemaking at these 2 locations.

From what was learned during stakeholder engagement, Clute never really had an actual area that was its “downtown.” Equipped with that information, the placemaking portion of the study focused on identifying an area that could function as that town center area. The intersection of Plantation and Main jumped out as an area that due to its central location and made a great location to develop placemaking design concepts.

The key for any placemaking effort is to find an area that already has some sort of amenity in place to draw people. In the heyday of the American shopping mall, the key to any successful example was getting the large anchor tenant retailers. People would go to the mall because of the those anchor tenants but then would go to other stores due to their convenience and proximity to those anchor tenants. For placemaking, those giant retailers that were common in shopping malls aren’t necessary, but something is needed that is an established part of the community. At the Main and Plantation intersection, El-Toro Mexican Restaurant is one of those regional draws. It is well known by Clute residents and those in neighboring cities go there frequently.

There are also several vacant buildings at this intersection that are in poor condition and present an opportunity for new / denser development on those properties. The intersection itself has some very odd geometry, particularly where Commerce intersects with Main and Plantation, creating unsafe traffic patterns. This also presents an opportunity for placemaking efforts, through resolving the odd street geometry which then provides additional land that would now be developable when it was previously just a leftover triangle.



In this first phase of the Clute Town Center, the re-development is focused on the Southeast corner of Main and Plantation. The existing dilapidated buildings will be removed along with the existing building across the street at the Southwest corner of Main and Plantation. The Southeast corner is the most logical place to begin placemaking efforts due to its proximity to El-Toro. This phase corrects the odd intersection of Commerce and Plantation. Commerce will now come to a T-intersection at Main. With the building and street removed at the Southwest corner, the area can be remade into a large grass lawn area for the interim. This open space area could be utilized for programmed city events or by other community organizations.

The re-development of the Southeast corner begins to lay out the framework for placemaking efforts that will create the Clute Town Center area. There will be multiple locations that can be small retail, office, or restaurants. A second floor to those buildings could be possible for residential uses if it is determined there is a market for those units. Parking will be behind the building so that the face of the buildings can be closer to the new tree lined streetscape of Main, which will also allow better connection to future development on the west side of Main. The gaps between the buildings are important. That interstitial space not only make the building façade more porous but also creates opportunities for outdoor spaces for those retail businesses to utilize that are set back away from the street. The interstitial spaces also function as a pass-through to the parking area, creating a more functional circulation pattern for pedestrians in this early phase of the Clute Town Center. There is a small building cluster along the Plantation frontage that fully develops the corner and promotes pedestrian circulation along Plantation.

At the point where Commerce intersects Main, the radii will need to accommodate larger truck traffic that will be heading to existing businesses further down Commerce. During this stage, the section of Main between Commerce and Plantation would become a truck-free zone, which will be discussed in the policy recommendations section of this document.



The focus of this second phase of the Clute Town Center project centers on infrastructure and street improvements to Main and Plantation. The existing alignment of Main has a slight jog in it at the Plantation intersection. This concept plan shows and an exaggeration of that jog. This will cause traffic to take notice of this area, particularly the Southbound direction. It also creates an opportunity for a planted median with shade trees to give this major thoroughfare a more residential feeling to it.

This phase will also construct the western side of Main streetscape, completing the full vision of the Main Street improvements. The streetscape will have infrastructure to ensure that shade trees are able to grow to their full potential. There will be enhanced roadway and sidewalk paving that will be utilized throughout the Town Center area to give the Town Center a unique aesthetic feel.

There will be intersection improvements and enhancements to the Main and Plantation intersection as well as the Main and Commerce intersection. This will include new signalization, enhanced roadway and crosswalk paving. Pedestrian access will be a very important part of the placemaking for the Town Center area, so an efficient safe crosswalk system will be provided to insure that pedestrians can move from one side of Main to the other knowing that there are systems in place to provide for their safety. The exact limits of the Main improvements will be determined as the project progresses.



This 1 to 4 year timeframe of improvements will also include the addition of more development on the west side of Main. This portion is decoupled from the Main Street infrastructure improvements so the project schedule can happen independent of those street improvements. This area could include more retail, office, and restaurant space, and second floor residential could also be a part of those buildings.

Having an open plaza or green space would be a key placemaking component of the Town Center project. As you can see in this conceptual plan, there have been portions allocated for those gathering spaces to help create that space for community connections. This open space area could include a variety of features including a water feature, a shade structure, and landscaping areas.

There is an infrastructure component of this phase, installing the interior drive will allow vehicular access to this side of the Town Center area. The positioning of this drive is important to note since it intentionally does not align with the Commerce intersection. That intentional placement prevents people from using this drive as a pass through to Commerce and from Commerce to Plantation, in order to ensure the safety of pedestrians in the Town Center area. The drive will only be for those accessing the businesses that are a part of this side of the Town Center.

With the completion of this phase, a substantial portion of the Town Center will have been completed and will be a significant achievement in terms of placemaking for Clute. Once completed, this will become a major gathering place in Clute and will foster a growing sense of community for this area.



PLACEMAKING

Clute Town Center

The final phase of the Clute Town Center will most likely take a longer amount of time to be fully realized, which is why its time frame is 5 to 15 years. This is because the final pieces of these types of projects can sometime take longer to fully realize due to various market and financial reasons. However this time frame is also dependent on the success of the previous phases, which is why it is extremely important to get those first phases right from a placemaking perspective to insure that they are very successful and set up the later phases for success as well.

This final phase will feature all of the features of the previous such as shade trees and enhanced paving. One important feature of this final phase could be the addition of a larger footprint anchor tenant for this western side of the Town Center. These building will have opportunities for additional retail, restaurants, office and again possible second story residential units. Adequate parking will be provided throughout the Town Center but only enough to meet code minimums since local residents will be encouraged to arrive there by other modes of transportation being that walking, bicycle or public transit.

With a completed Town Center, Clute will have a center retail area that citizens have been asking for and needing for many years. It will become a central gathering space for the community and the area over all.



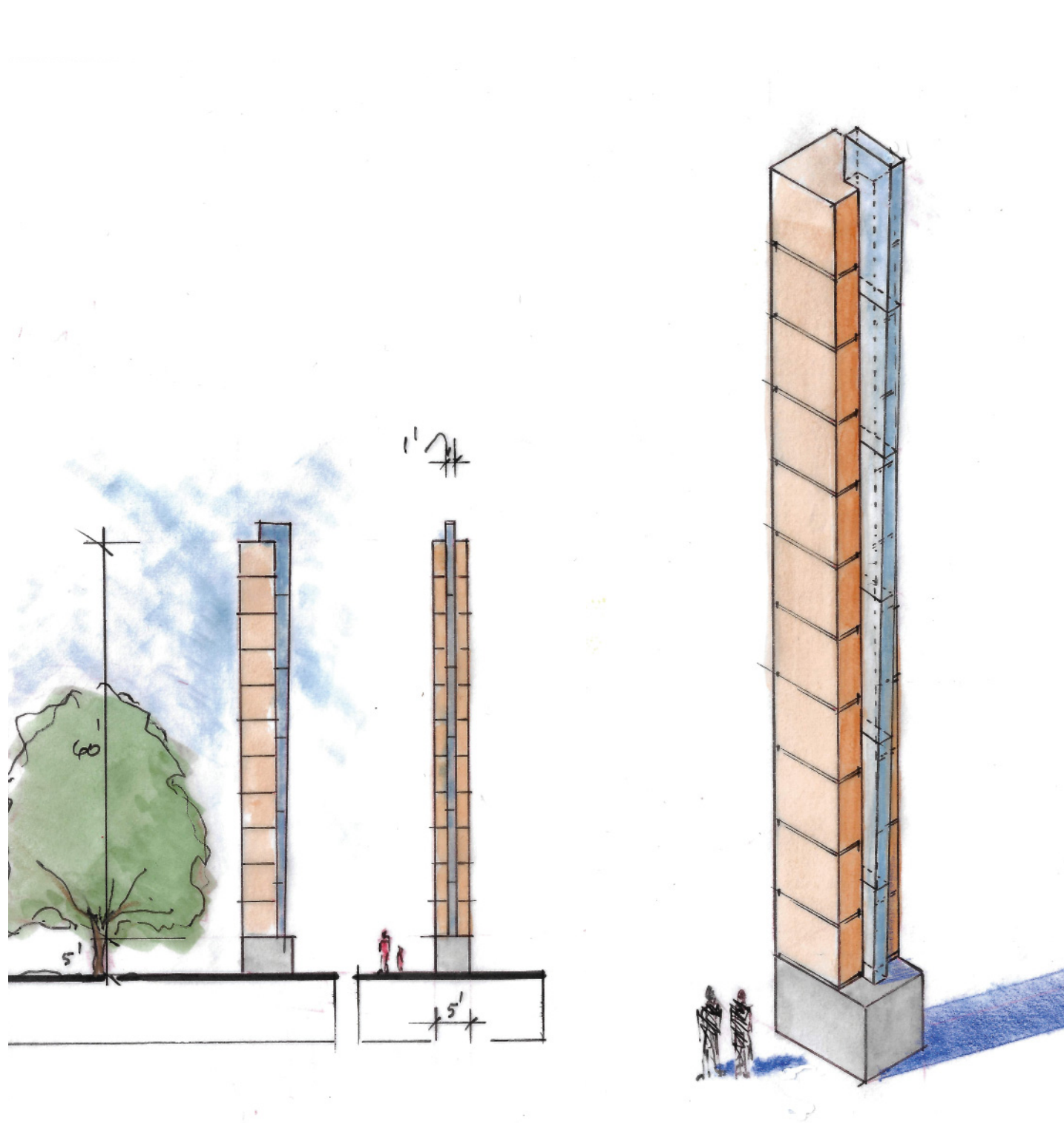
During the development of the Clute Town Center concept, it became evident that it would need some way to indicate its existence from a distance away, particularly from 288 or Brazosport Parkway. This is crucial. To be successful, the Town Center will need the support of the surrounding communities, not just that of the Clute residents.

Several ideas were explored to accomplish this. It should not only be an indicator, but something that would be uniquely Clute and work well with the branding of the Town Center. Ultimately it was determined that a vertical beacon would be the best way to achieve both requirements. The consultant team has done previous studies on similar vertical elements to determine the minimum height needed to be successful. Based on previous research, objects like these need to be a minimum of 60 feet in height. At 60 feet it will be above most tree canopies, ensuring that it will be visible from a variety of locations, especially from major highways. A beacon like this one also needs lighting incorporated in the design so that it is visible at night.

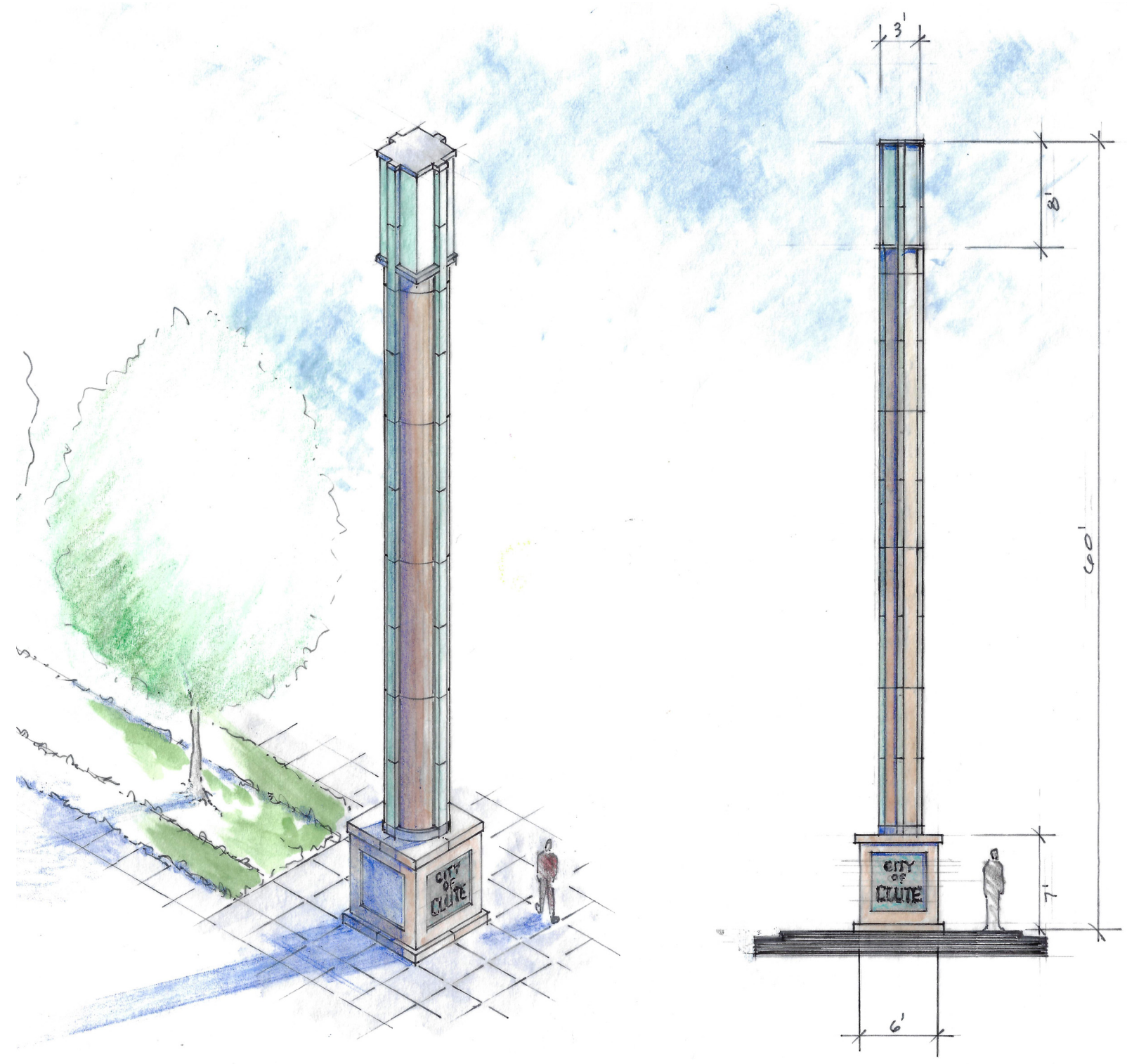
Two different conceptual designs were developed as part of this study to provide general guidance for the beacon's appearance. The final design could look much different than those shown in this study, depending on the decisions and tastes of the city, but the team felt it important to include these options to provide a graphic to aid understanding of the potential style and size of this proposed beacon.

The location of the beacon is equally important, and after evaluating several locations in the Town Center, it was decided that the new landscape median would be the best location for the element in this conceptual plan shown. At that location, it is visible to those in cars but also acts as a gateway to the area. Beacons such as this are very important from a placemaking perspective because they not only act as visual indicators but are elements that can help the Town Center establish their own unique identity.





Clute Beacon - Option 1



Clute Beacon - Option 2

PLACEMAKING

Clute Town Center

As is common with many planning projects such as this one, the plans will evolve and change somewhat as they are implemented over time. This Town Center Plan is no different in that regards. At the conclusion of the Livable Centers Study process, the planning team members were notified by one of the property owners that they had a differing idea for a portion of the western edge of the Town Center area. Therefore in respect to that decision the plan was slightly modified to accommodate this change, which is seen in this revised rendering.

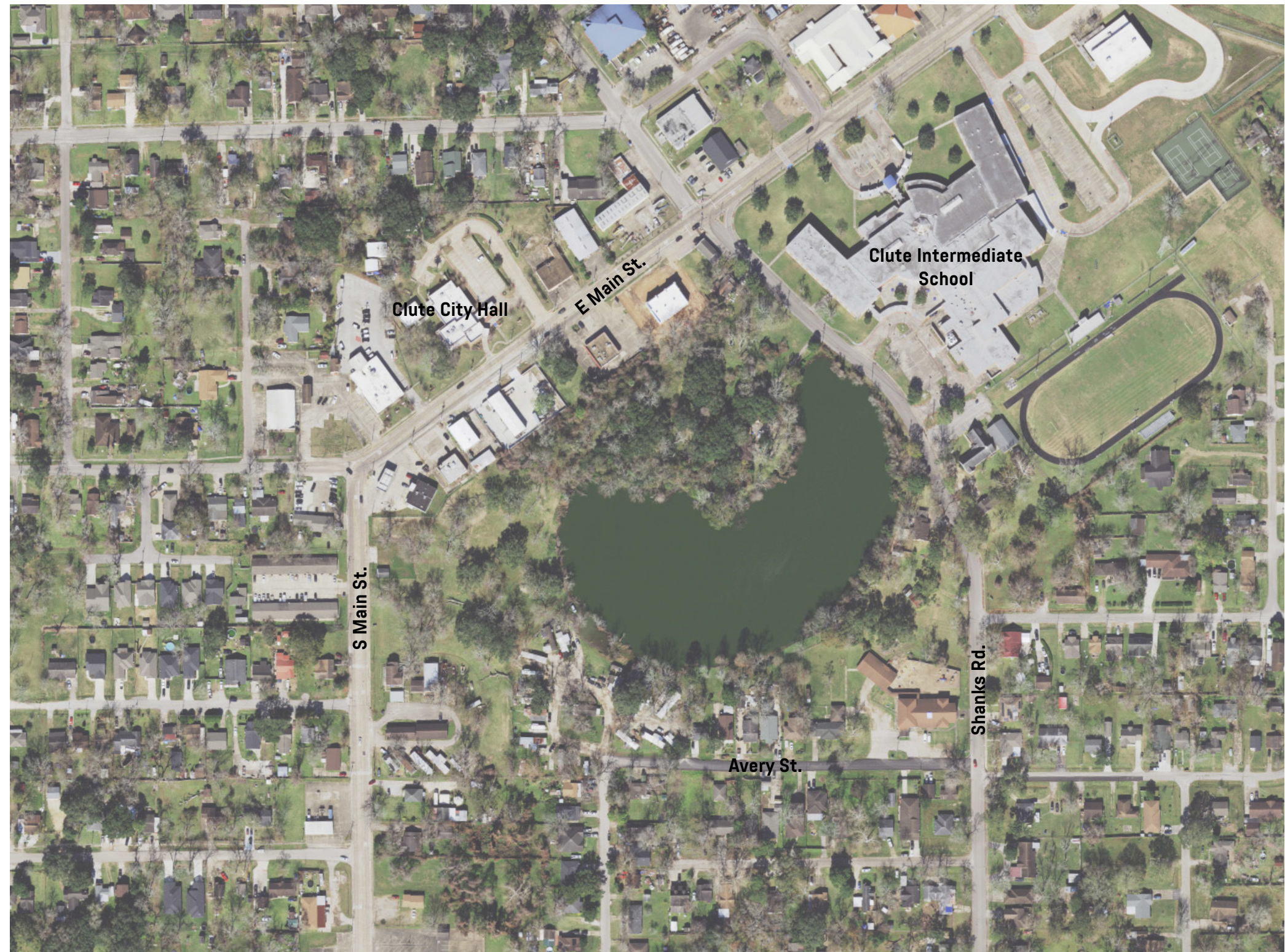
The planning team had no issues with making this modification since the main features of the Town Center Concept remain. This conceptual plan will continue to evolve as it is implemented over time by the City and their private development partners. This revision shows an added open plaza at the Northwest corner, to allow for various pop-up event style programming. The access drive remains with a well designed tree shaded streetscape to allow for a pleasant user experience.



Years

Shanks (Clute) Lake is one of the more unique undervalued amenities our team has come across. It has immense natural beauty and, according to residents, the lake is most likely spring-fed since the water level is fairly consistent. The downside of this unique feature is that it isn't publicly accessible by Clute residents since the lake and the land surrounding it is privately owned. Fortunately, the owners of Shanks Lake and majority of the property surrounding the lake are interested in doing something with the lake and making it an area open to the public.

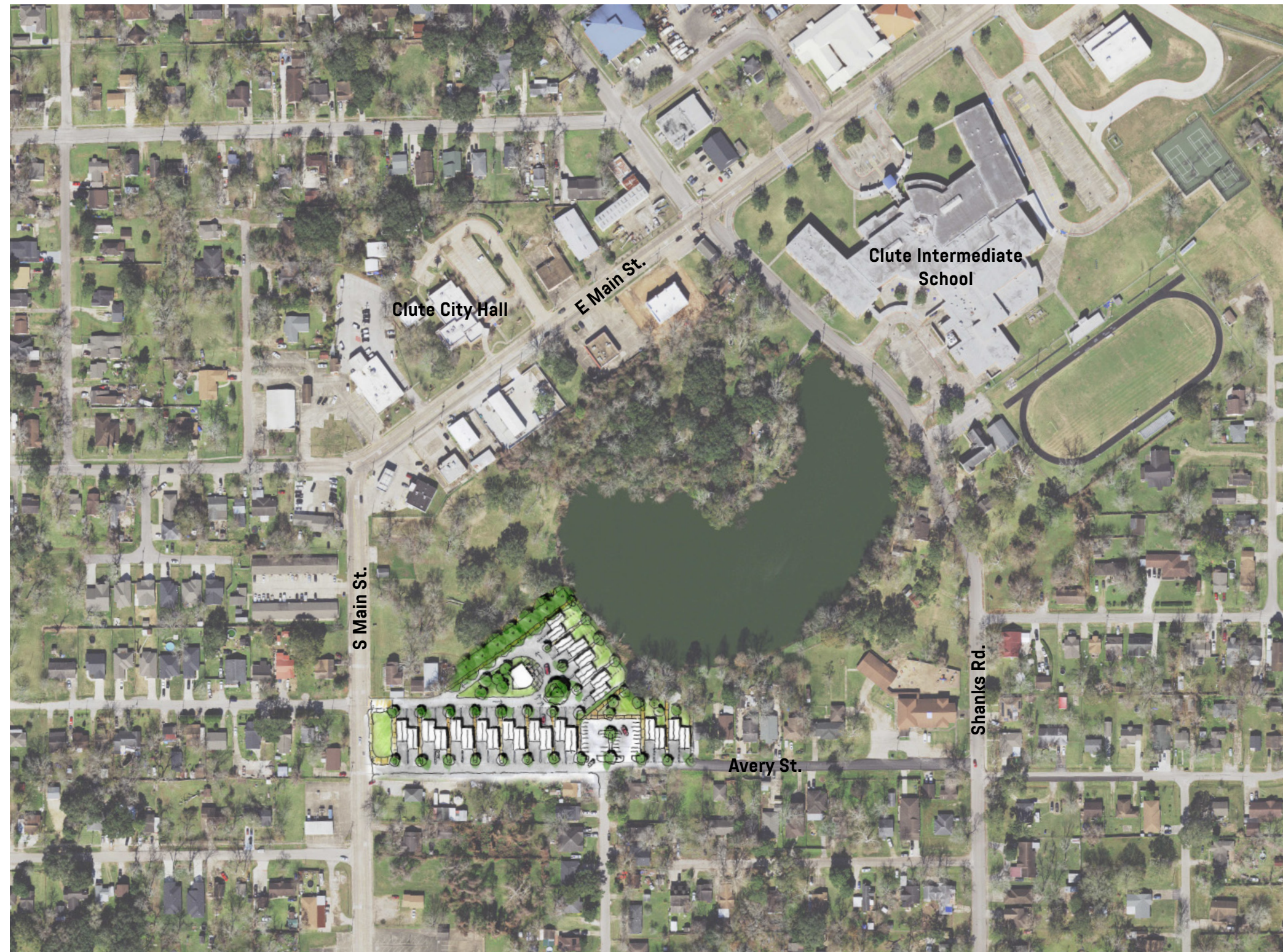
The lake is very centrally located in Clute and has frontage on 2 well-traveled roadways in Main street and Shanks road, which are both streets that have recommended improvements outlined in the connectivity chapter. It is near civic functions in Clute City Hall, Clute Library, Clute Police Department and Clute City Municipal Court, as well as being across the street from Clute Intermediate School. There are many residents that live in close proximity of the lake. Those residents would greatly benefit from access to the lake and any placemaking efforts.



When considering the best use for the Shanks lake area it was determined that this area needed to be somewhat different than that of the Town Center. An area that is focused on housing, open space, and outdoor gathering that could be programmed for a variety of public events and uses.

With that in mind, the team agreed the first phase should focus on providing more housing for the area at a more affordable price point. This conceptual plan indicates a configuration that is slightly denser than the single family housing that is the predominant housing type in Clute. It is not envisioned to be multi-family but would be either duplexes or townhomes which would work well with the character of the area. It is intended to be a small neighborhood with an identity to promote a sense of community.

This first phase would also look to improve area circulation by extending Avery Street so that it will now connect to Main Street. This will allow residents to access Main by personal vehicle, walking, or bicycle, as well as transit stops along Main. A public parking lot is shown to be a part of this phase that could not only be utilized by visitors and residents but will be very useful as future phases develop to provide access to open space features in later phases.

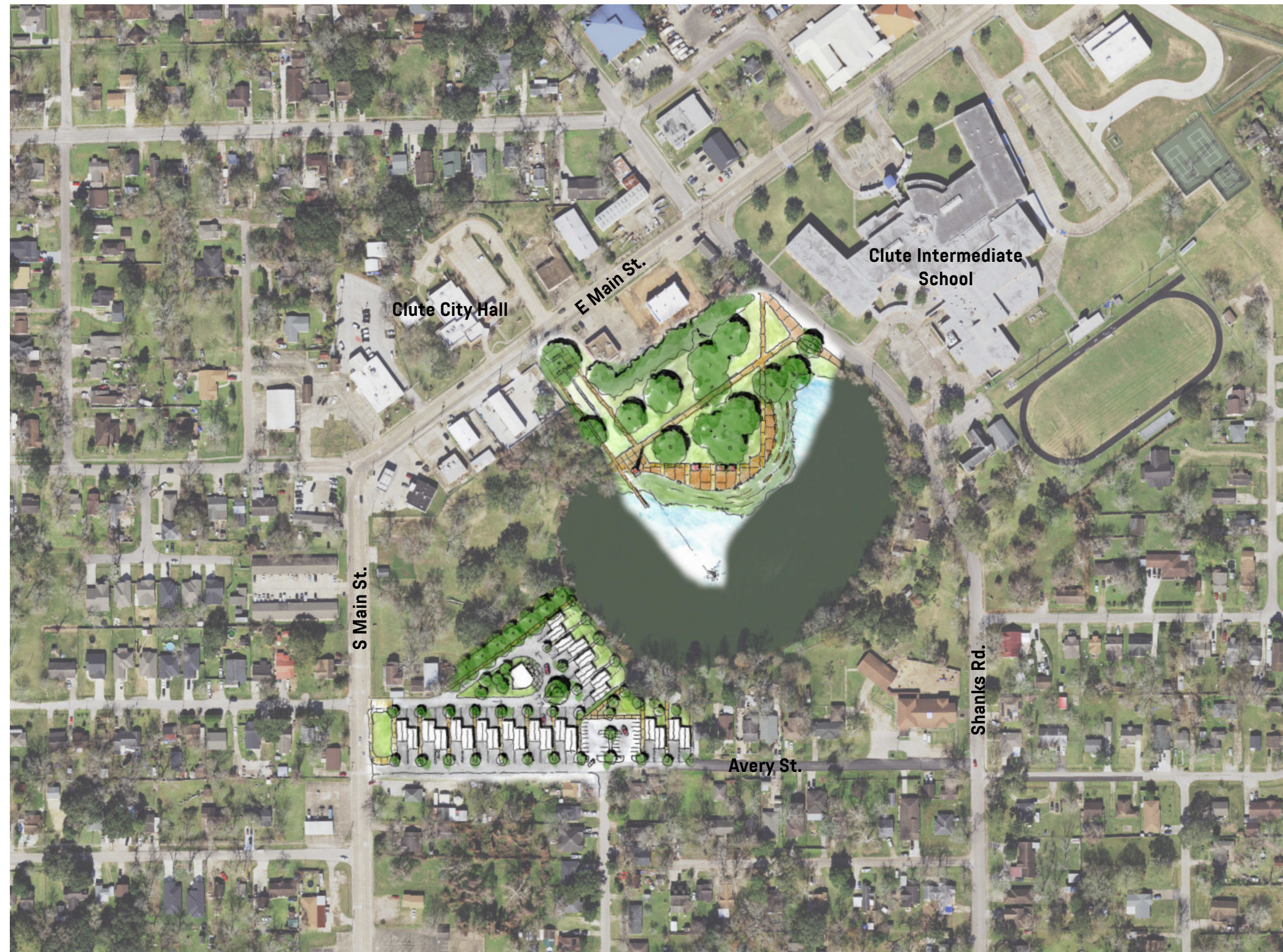


Creating open space is a vitally important aspect of creating a place here at Shanks Lake. The residents have Clute have viewed the lake as an important location in Clute but haven't been able to really benefit from it. So by providing an open space area early on in the development of the project it will give people that public access they have been looking for.

This area of the lake is an ideal spot for open space. Because it doesn't have street frontage, it isn't useful for other uses like retail. It is envisioned to have a direct connection to Clute City Hall in the form of a promenade and, in that promenade, could be a similar Clute Beacon as was shown earlier in this study to mark the significance of the space.

The open space could have plazas overlooking the lake as well as various areas to sit along the lake. Preservation of the existing trees will be important to provide shade since they are mature trees and should be preserved whenever possible. Some very small kiosk-style retail locations could be possible if it is needed, so infrastructure for such items should be incorporated into this phase.

With these first 2 phases, the placemaking framework begins to take shape and residents will start to recognize this as its own unique place.



In this next phase of the Shanks Lake project of years 5 to 10, you see a dramatic jump to a much more established place with most of the features now in place. As was said previously, this project was envisioned to have a distinctively different feel to it when compared to the Town Center, so that the two can support each other and not be in competition.

This phase focuses on creating community gathering spaces with plazas, trees, and what is viewed as an open air market, similar to those seen in other communities. This open air market could be a place to hold a local farmer's market, smaller local retailers, and possibly a museum focused on local history. This open air market could, in time, become closed-in buildings for more permanent retail uses as has been seen in examples of similar places. So any structures will need to be designed so that they could accommodate that future change.

There is increased access to the lake in this phase and walkways going around the lake now become visible. A boat dock for small sailboats, paddle boards, or paddle boats could be developed, along with other kiosk-style retail. More open space on the east side of the lake now appears to create open space areas closer to the residents along Shanks road.



Once the lake has become well established as a place for the community, we see completing a loop trail as an important piece to complete the open space portion of the project. This will help it become a place to go to enjoy time with fellow residents and become that place that people really enjoy and think fondly of.

It was recognized that this would be more challenging to achieve since it would most likely involve negotiating some sort of trail easement with the property owners on the southern side of the lake. For this reason it was included in the later phases because at that time the place would be well established and very successful in terms of use and having established its own unique identity.

This last portion would essentially complete the vision for Clute Lake, creating a unique amenity to be enjoyed by the community for many years to come.



PLACEMAKING

Shanks Lake

In this final phase of Shanks Lake, we could see the need for creating a bridge across the lake to provide access to those that live in the area to the southeast of the lake. This bridge could be a variety of different styles such as a boardwalk or floating bridge.

The team recognized that this would be a substantial project in terms of cost, which led to it being a final added feature of the project.

Shanks Lake, with this entire placemaking effort, would no longer be an underutilized area of natural beauty, but would become a cherished place in the community to be enjoyed for generations.



OVERALL STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS



RECOMMENDATIONS

The study team makes policy recommendations in the following areas:

- **ADOPT AND INCORPORATE LIVABLE CENTERS STUDY**
- **FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION**
- **COMMUNITY BRANDING**



RECOMMENDATIONS

Adopt and Incorporate Livable Centers Study

The City should formally adopt recommendations and policy directives based on the Study after Council approves and/or amends the findings. The adopted Study recommendations should then be incorporated across the board into future City planning documents. Not all the planning documents listed below exist today in Clute, but the Study recommendations should be made a part of those plans that do exist and considered as new plans are developed. These include:

- a. Future Comprehensive Plan
- b. Transportation Plan
- c. Park and Trails Plan
- d. Economic Development Plan
- e. Downtown Plan
- f. Other related plans and policy documents

RECOMMENDATIONS

Funding and Implementation

1. Incorporate into Capital Improvement Plan – The findings of this Study should be incorporated into the Capital Improvement process. The Capital Improvement Plan allows the City to address the infrastructure needs of the community and the financing mechanisms that are proposed for achieving those goals. It should be part of the review of the City’s progress during the annual budget cycle each year. Matching potential funding sources to projects and assigning timelines for completion assures that the City is moving toward achieving the collective vision for the community. This could take several budget cycles, but will help establish a timeline and long-term goals for citizens and development partners, both in the private and public sectors.

2. Pursue Grant Funding – The City has opportunities to potentially fund at least some of the Study recommendations – in whole or in part – through grant funding. City staff is already working on possible grants with TXDOT, and with H-GAC. Other potential grant partners include state and federal funding, and private industry.

3. Authorize a Public Improvement District(s) – Working with local property owners, the City should explore creation of one or more Public Improvement Districts (PIDs) to further the development of the catalyst projects presented in the Study: Shanks Lake and Clute Town Center. Cities in Texas may create a PID under authority granted by Chapter 372 of the Texas Local Government Code. The City could create a single PID to service both projects, or create a separate PID or PIDs for each.

A PID is a special district that allows a city to charge an assessment against properties within a certain designated boundary. That assessment may be used to support debt to pay for infrastructure and other public improvements, including public art, parks, landscaping, and more. The assessment is set at the creation of the PID, and so does not change over time, providing predictability to property owners within the district. It is a useful tool for developers who wish to create master planned projects, special amenities, or who are faced with heavy infrastructure burdens and/or the development of blighted or challenging properties.

Before creating a PID, the City should develop a PID policy to help set expectations and to provide consistency for any future PIDs. There are a number of consultants in the state who specialize in creating PID policies and districts. PIDs have a successful track record in Texas.

4. Consider a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) for the Study Area – A TIRZ is a special zone created by a local government under state law to promote investment and economic development within the designated area. These TIRZ zones are intended to help finance costs of redevelopment and to promote the orderly growth and development of an area that otherwise would not likely develop to its full potential in a timely manner. Such projects are also known as Tax Increment Finance projects, or TIFs.

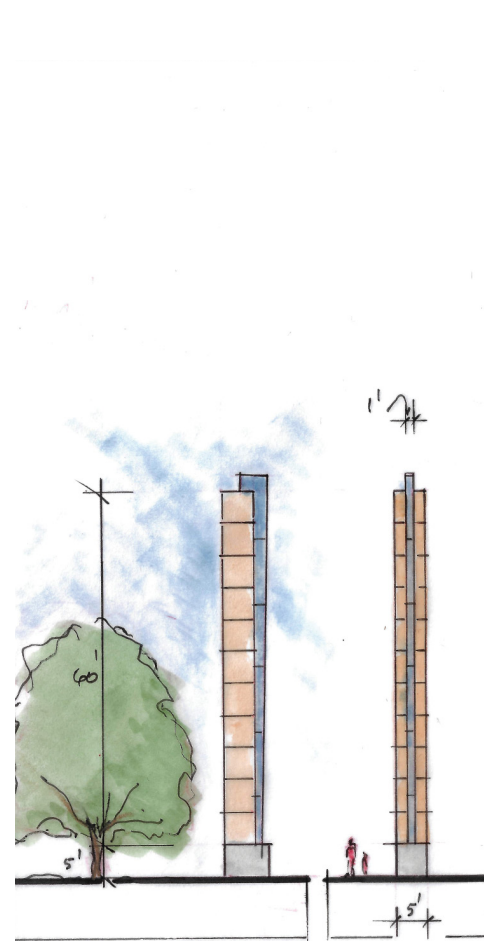
A portion of the future taxes collected from within the TIRZ is dedicated for use within the zone, and thus can be used to finance improvements. One way to look at it is that TIRZ helps catalyze new tax base, and an “increment” of that tax base is then used to pay off the financing that catalyzed the initial investment. A TIRZ can work independently or in conjunction with a PID. TIRZes are authorized under 311 of the Texas Tax Code.

RECOMMENDATIONS

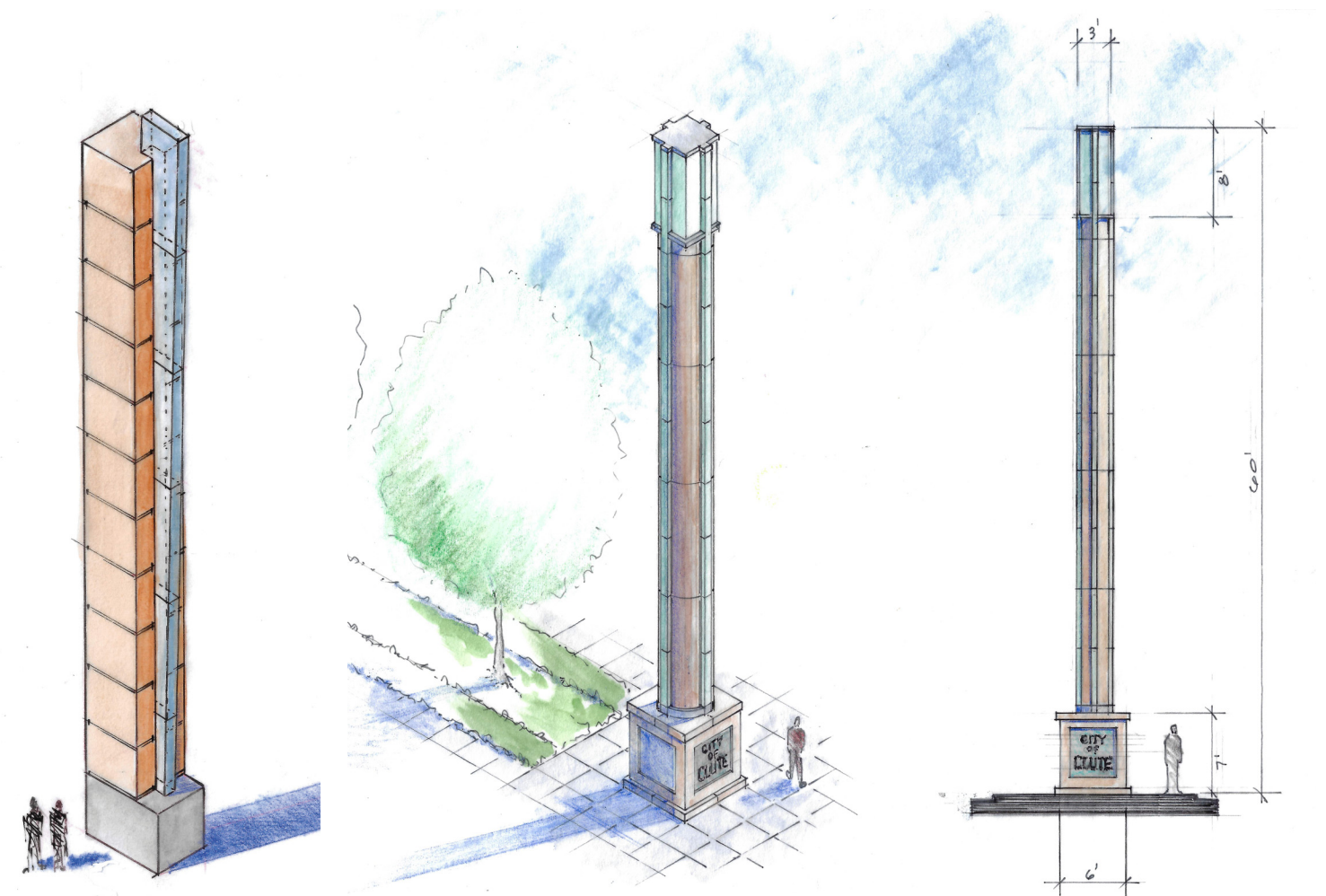
Community Branding

As part of the Study, the citizen Stakeholder Committee endorsed draft images that include the creation of placemaking landmarks in the form of obelisk monuments. The Study report presents two options. Next steps for the City should include selecting and refining one of the options. That monument/obelisk motif is planned for incorporation into the two primary catalyst projects, on Shanks Lake and Clute Town Center. The City should consider using images from the selected monument design as a branding tool for Clute. This might include images or reflections of the monument on City-sponsored productions:

- a. Advertising for community events
- b. On street banners
- c. On websites
- d. With merchandise given away or sold at local fairs, and
- e. Possibly on other City materials, such as letterhead.



Clute Beacon - Option 1



Clute Beacon - Option 2

The priority ranking is the result of requests made during the Public Involvement component of the process, specifically during the virtual Town Hall Meeting. The Study Team recommends the City of Clute follow the citizens' recommendations during implementation of this Study.

1. Development of New Shops, Restaurants, and Places for Entertainment

This top priority addresses the further development of the Clute Town Center and Shanks Lake and is included in the "Placemaking" chapter of this planning document.

2. Streets, Roads, and Traffic Improvements

These improvements can be seen throughout the "Connectivity" chapter of this planning document. Most of these recommendations focus on improving multi-modal transportation.

3. Parks, Green Spaces, and Beautification

The City of Clute does a great job at providing residents with good park space and programming. This can be greatly expanded with implementation of the Shanks Lake Plan. The majority of the proposed street sections show the addition of street trees, which greatly impact beautification of the City.



CITY OF CLUTE

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