Houston-Galveston Area Council

WESTCHASE DISTRICT

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LIVABLE CENTERS STUDY

Prepared by Asakura Robinson Company with Walter P. Moore

February 2018

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The preparation of this document has been financed in part through grant[s] frpm the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, U.S Department of Transportation, under the Metropolitan Planning Program, Section 104(f) of Title 23, U.S. Code. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"WHATEVER YOU CHASE... YOU'LL FIND IN WESTCHASE DISTRICT."

The Westchase District's brand reflects the area's diverse base of job opportunities, retail, and residential living. With 94,000 jobs, a mix of housing options, major retail corridors, and access to two of the region's major highways, the area is poised for further growth.

Yet with growth comes new challenges and opportunities. Employers in the District are conveniently located to attract talent from across the Houston region, but increased commuting in single-occupancy vehicles creates traffic and mobility pressures. The District's residential stock has remained well-maintained, but competitive business districts are working to attract more mixed-use development to attract young employees, and homeownership opportunities to attract families. The Westchase District's Long-Range Plan, completed in 2006, recognized the need for the District to evolve its mobility strategies and development mix in order to continue its successful trajectory.

The Westchase District Livable Centers Study represents a step in the continued evolution of this effort. Read on to discover the purpose of this study, the context in which it was conducted, and the concepts and recommendations that will help shape the District's future.

This Westchase District Livable Centers Study was commissioned by the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) and the Westchase District within the context of the District's current challenges and opportunities. Livable Centers Studies are sponsored by H-GAC with local partners to create places where people can live, work, and play with less reliance on their cars. According to H-GAC, "Livable Centers, with concentrations of residential and employment, support more trips by foot, bicycle, transit, or carpool."

The study works to meet the objectives of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Livability Principles, as well as the goals of the 2006 Westchase District Long-Range Plan (LRP). The District has actively worked to implement the LRP since its completion, and identified the Livable Centers study area as a current area of focus for achieving the LRP goals. Both the HUD principles and the LRP include providing transportation choices, improving housing options, and enhancing economic competitiveness as top priorities.

STUDY PRIORITIES

HUD Livability Principles	Westchase District Long-Range Plan Goals
• Provide more **transportation choices** • Promote **equitable, affordable housing** • Enhance **economic competitiveness** • Support **existing communities** • **Coordinate and leverage** federal policies and investment • **Value** communities and neighborhoods	• **Become a "Brand Name" Urban Center** that has a clear sense of place and a unique identity achieved through public-realm improvements • **Become West Houston's Downtown**, offering a vibrant urban lifestyle by increasing density and cultural richness through mixed-use, high-quality, retail, lifestyle and entertainment centers. • **Become a Livable Downtown** with public gathering places, plenty of things to do and places to see; where people can walk to parks, cultural events and work while feeling secure • **Become a Center of Gravity** by making the whole District a regional "destination" that people want to experience. • **Become More Mobile and Connected** with street and parking improvements that respect the central role of the automobile; with open spaces, walkways and bike paths that improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation; and with public transit that can quickly move masses of people • **Become a Destination that Adds Value** by creating a memorable, pedestrian-friendly, quality environment that becomes a catalyst for private development and offers a premium return on investment

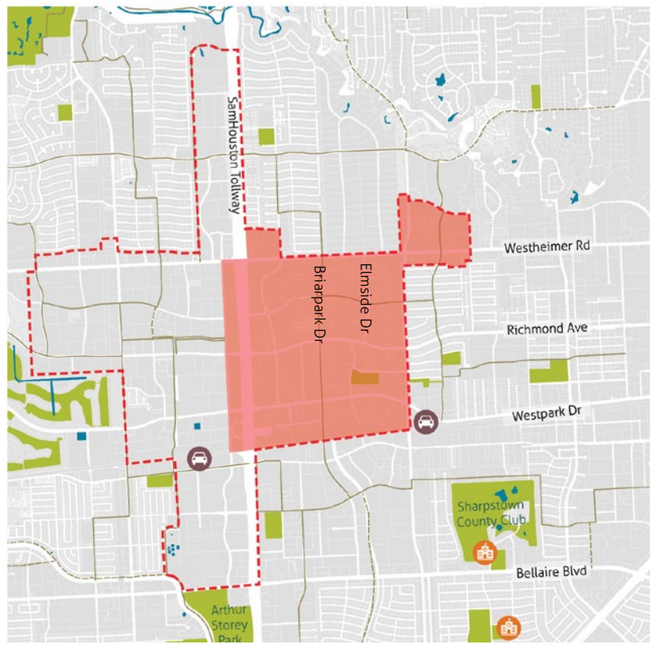
This Livable Centers Study focused on a specific study area encompassing the portion of the Westchase District between Rogerdale Road and Gessner Road. As defined, the study area focuses on the area east of the Sam Houston Tollway or "Beltway," as well as opportunities to better connect this area across the Beltway to the District's western side.

The Westchase District and other public-sector partners have created a number of planning documents and studies that included recommendations for the study area. Some notable recent studies include the Westchase District Pedestrian-Bicycle Plan (2010); the Westchase District Mobility Plan (updated in 2017); the Houston Bike Plan (2016); and the Westchase Trails and Parks Master Plan (2016). Summaries of these studies, as well as additional relevant documents, are included in Appendix A: Plan Review.

With so much recent planning work on relevant topics completed, the study team for this Livable Centers Study worked with a Core Team of client representatives and a Steering Committee of stakeholders to identify how this work could help move implementation of these good ideas forward. The key questions identified with stakeholders were:

1. What are **highly tactical and tangible strategies for public-sector action** that can bring the private-sector to the table in developing mixed-use, walkable places?
2. How do we **combine big, impactful ideas with smaller, incremental projects** in order to improve quality of life and reduce traffic congestion in the study area?
3. Where can we **add housing options and amenities** that would encourage local employees to live in the District, while also **retaining and improving quality of life for the diverse group of residents already living in the study area**?

PROJECT STUDY AREA



The project study area encompasses the portion of Westchase District east of Rogerdale Road and north of the Westpark Tollway.

CONCEPTS SUMMARY

The five concepts and individual recommendations in this Livable Centers Study work to answer the study's central questions by:

- Combining major projects with smaller, incremental program or policy changes.
- Focusing on how public-sector action can motivate the private sector to act.
- Encouraging alternative modes of travel including walking, biking, and transit.
- Encouraging new housing options in areas that currently lack housing development, while avoiding any recommendations that would displace existing residents.

The following pages summarize the intent of each of the five concepts in the report. Section 4: Concept Plan provides a detailed review of all of the study's recommendations.

**Hollow bullet points represent recommendations not shown on map.*

CONCEPT 1. BUILD THE FUTURE WESTCHASE DISTRICT

- 1.1A Westheimer Area: Create A New Front Yard for Mixed-Use Development – The Promenade
- 1.1B Westheimer Area: Develop a Signature Park on the Promenade
- 1.1C Westheimer Area: Advocate for Premier Bus Rapid Transit on Westheimer
- 1.2A Westpark and Gessner: Encourage TOD Development at the Gessner Park-and-Ride
- 1.2B Westpark and Gessner: Implement Public Realm and Universal Design Improvements
- 1.3A Elmside and Meadowglen: Build the Case for a Mixed-Use Redevelopment
- 1.3B Elmside and Meadowglen: Improve Walkable Connections to Adjacent Residential Properties
- 1.4A Southwest Study Area: Make Critical Infill Street Connections
- 1.4B Southwest Study Area: Target Development of Patio Homes + Similar Residential Typologies

CONCEPT 2. CREATE A WALKABLE PUBLIC REALM FOR PEOPLE

- 2.1 Activate Walkable Loops and Networks with Public Realm Interventions
- 2.1A Develop Paths along Property "Seams" - The Lanes at Westchase*.
- 2.2 Redefine Setbacks to Connect Buildings with the Public Realm.
- 2.3 Create a Connectivity and Walkability Toolkit for Property Owners.
- 2.4 Coordinate with the City to Ensure CIP Projects Advance Walkability

CONCEPT 3. PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR COMMUTERS, VISITORS, AND RESIDENTS

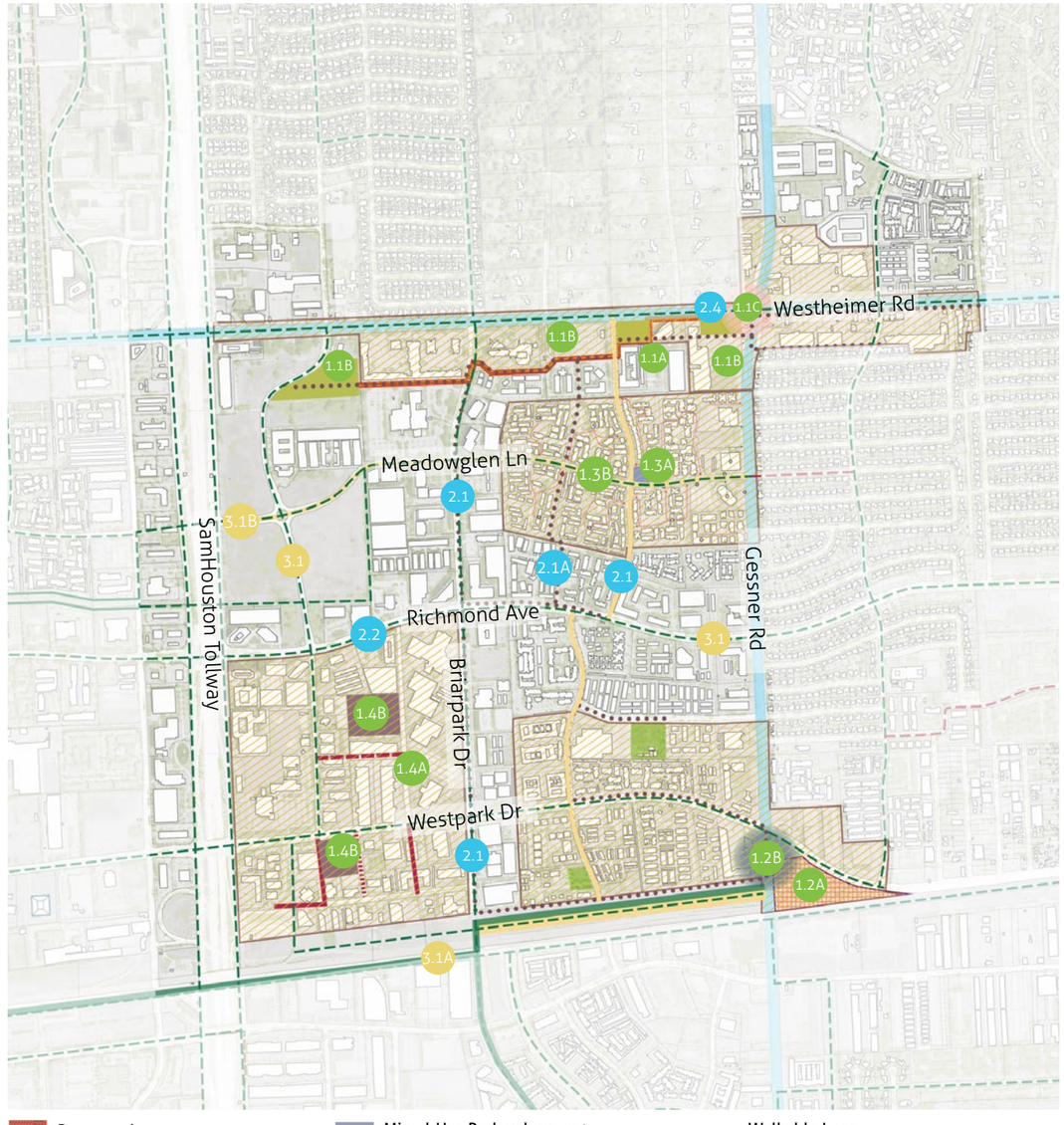
- 3.1 Implement Bicycling Improvements and Encourage End-of-Trip Facilities
- 3.1A Connect Pedestrians and Bicyclists to Brays Bayou
- 3.1B Connect across Beltway to Library Loop Trail
- 3.2 Develop a Shared Parking Program
- 3.3 Examine Opportunities for Additional Park-and-Ride Systems

CONCEPT 4. DEVELOP HIGH QUALITY HOUSING FOR ALL RESIDENTS

- 4.1 Improve Homeownership Availability and Attraction
- 4.2 Support a Multi-Generational Community
- 4.3 Adapt Westchase's Residential Brand

CONCEPT 5. ADVANCE COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 5.1 Continue to Implement a Multi-Functional Green Infrastructure Network
- 5.2 Sponsor Active Living Programming for Residents and Employees



RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Westheimer Area: Class A, Mixed Use Development
  - 1.1A Create A New Front Yard for Mixed-Use Development: The Promenade
  - 1.1B Develop a Signature Park on the Promenade
  - 1.1C Advocate for Premier Bus Rapid Transit on Westheimer
- 1.2 Westpark and Gessner: An Active, Transit-Oriented Hub
  - 1.2A Encourage TOD Development at the Gessner Park-and-Ride
  - 1.2B Implement Public Realm and Universal Design Improvements
- 1.3 Elmside at Meadowglen: Repurpose Aging Retail
  - 1.3A Build the Case for a Mixed-Use Redevelopment
  - 1.3B Improve Walkable Connections to Adjacent Residential Properties.
- 1.4 Southwest Study Area: Connectivity to Simulate Change
  - 1.4A Make Critical Infill Street Connections
  - 1.4B Target Development of Patio Homes and Similar Residential Typologies

CONCEPT 1

Build the Future Westchase District

Concept 1 focuses on opportunities for the District and stakeholders to build on the area's core assets by actively fostering mixed-use, walkable development. Recommendations target four specific "redevelopment areas" that were identified with help from local stakeholders and developers:

- Westheimer Corridor: A location for Class A, mixed-use development. The corridor is connected by a signature green network that attracts residents, employees, and visitors alike, and connects to the larger region through bus rapid transit.
- Gessner Road at Westpark Drive: An active transit-oriented development hub with an emphasis on attractive retail and universal design.
- Elmside Drive at Meadowglen Lane: A small, high-quality mixed-use development that serves neighborhood retail needs and encourages residents to walk to local destinations.
- Southwest Study Area: Increased connectivity and strategic property acquisition promote the development of new housing options, including homeownership opportunities.

A new Promenade will encourage walking within the Westheimer corridor and redefine the area as a mixed-use destination.

CONCEPT 1 MAP

CONCEPT 2

Create a Walkable Public Realm for People

The Westchase District's commitment to walkability has been expressed in the recent Pedestrian-Bicycle Plan and the Parks and Trails Plan, both completed in the last two years. The recommendations in this section build on these ideas by promoting design opportunities that will improve the interface between the public realm and private properties, thereby making walking a more appealing mode of travel in the study area.

- Walkable Loops: "Walkable loops" defined by strong tree canopies, playful wayfinding and signage, and innovative programming will connect parks, retail, and other destinations within the neighborhood. Property owners on large superblocks will be encouraged to create easements along their property boundaries to permit the development of a network of walking paths – or "The Lanes at Westchase" – that provide a landmark feature for the area and decrease long walking distances.

- Redefined Setbacks and Land Use Restrictions: Large setbacks in the study area make walking less attractive, and land use restrictions decrease opportunities for mixed-use development. Reducing these requirements will help promote walkability and street-level activity, thereby also increasing public safety.

- Connectivity and Walkability Toolkit: A new cost-sharing program created by the Westchase District will push property owners to increase the pedestrian-friendliness of their properties by offering incentives to add pedestrian infrastructure, such as new pedestrian gates or sidewalks. An easy-to-use Toolkit will define the terms of the program and promote uptake by owners and managers.

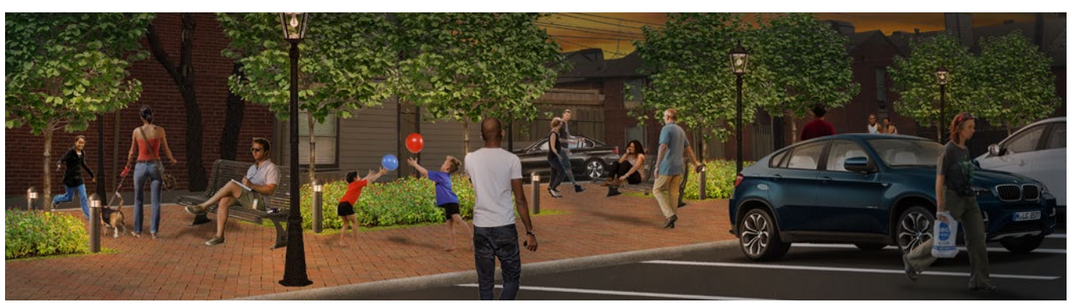
- CIP Project Coordination: The District will coordinate with the City to ensure that planned capital improvements are consistent with a walkable environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

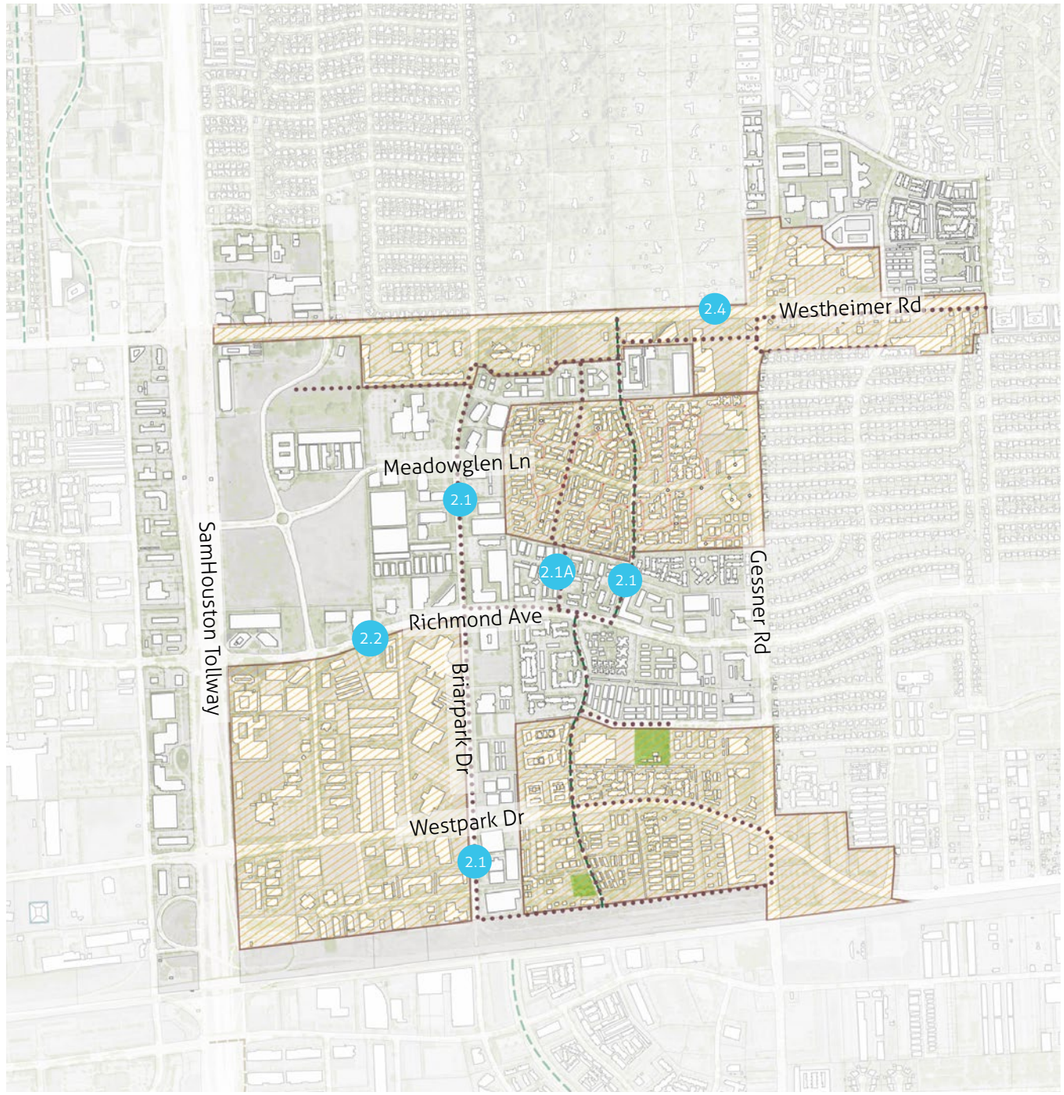
- 2.1 Activate Walkable Loops and Networks with Public Realm Interventions
  - 2.1A Develop Paths along Property "Seams" - The Lanes at Westchase.
- 2.2 Redefine Setbacks to Connect Buildings with the Public Realm.
- 2.3 Create a Connectivity and Walkability Toolkit for Property Owners.
- 2.4 Coordinate with the City to Ensure CIP Projects Advance Walkability

**Hollow bullet points represent recommendations not shown on map.*

Walkable loops will include a new network of interior-block paths, "The Lanes at Westchase," that run along the boundaries of large properties and divide superblocks.



CONCEPT 2 MAP



RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Implement Bicycling Improvements and Encourage End-of-Trip Facilities
  - 3.1A Connect Pedestrians and Bicyclists to Brays Bayou
  - 3.1B Connect across Beltway to Library Loop Trail
- 3.2 Develop a Shared Parking Program
- 3.3 Examine Opportunities for Additional Park-and-Ride Systems.

**Hollow bullet points represent recommendations not shown on map.*

This area along the proposed Promenade includes a new park, offices, apartments, townhouses, and retail stores. The park could share parking spaces with many of the buildings to allow more green space and fewer parking lots.

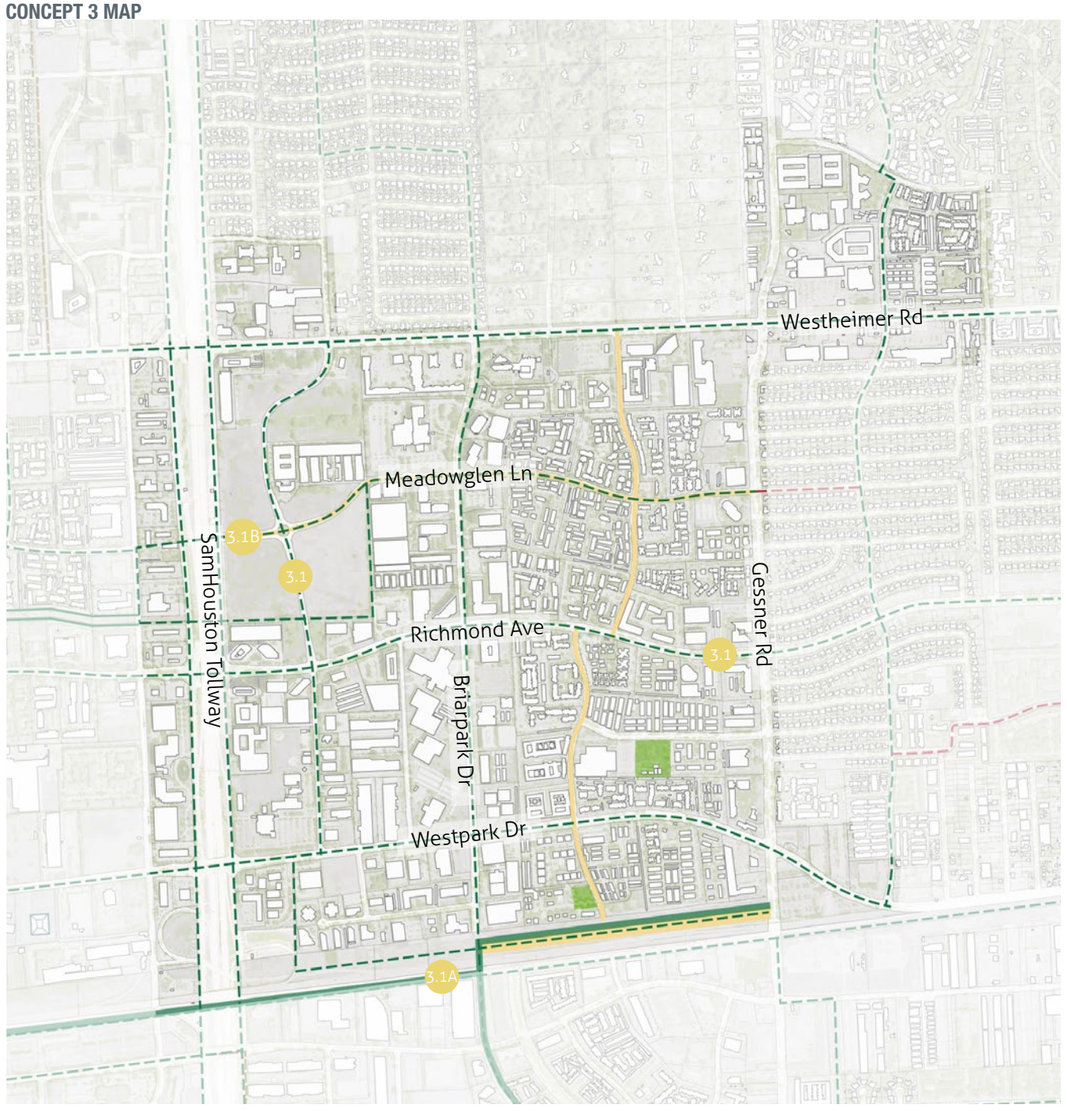
CONCEPT 3

Provide Transportation Options for Commuters, Visitors, and Residents

This concept identifies discrete opportunities to promote alternative transportation modes – such as biking and transit – to all commuters, visitors, and residents who travel to and from the study area. Recommendations include improvements to bicycle network connectivity, and provision of new transit options such as park-and-ride and Max service to increase transit mode share for Westchase District residents and employees. Together, these interventions will decrease traffic congestion and improve air quality in the study area.

- Bicycling Improvements and End-of-Trip Facilities: Implementing the recommendations of the Houston Bike Plan and Westchase District Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan will add safe and comfortable bicycle lanes to the area, including trail or connector trail cpnnections to Brays Bayou and improved comfort when crossing the Beltway. Encouraging employers to add bicycle racks, showers, and other end-of-trip needs will improve the rates of bicycle commuting to work.
- Shared Parking Program: A shared parking program in which multiple uses share parking lots and structures (e.g. a shared parking lot for a mixed-use development and a nearby park) will decrease the need for added surface parking and minimize the "dead space" that unused parking creates
- Park-and-Ride Systems: New park-and-ride and MAX express bus systems will help bring employees to work in a convenient manner and decrease congestion on the roads.

CONCEPT 3 MAP



RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Improve Homeownership Availability and Attraction

4.2 Support a Multi-Generational Community

4.3 Adapt Westchase's Residential Brand

**Hollow bullet points represent recommendations not shown on map.*

CONCEPT 4

Develop High-Quality Housing for all Residents

The study area includes a large number of garden apartment complexes that offer well-maintained, quality living spaces at reasonable prices. While these are valuable housing assets in many ways, the complexes are not oriented toward walkability and do not reflect the full spectrum of housing types that might attract Westchase District employees. There are also few homeownership options in the study area for renters who might be looking for their next steps into housing stability, or employees looking to purchase in the area where they work. This concept focuses on opportunities to add Class A rental options, new homeownership options, and family-oriented assets while preserving existing affordable options for residents.

- Homeownership Availability and Attraction: Homeownership options are important to retain families in the study area and offer employees options to live and work locally. Focusing on vacant properties, and working to increase sale prices through new amenities and school quality, can help attract single-family development. To offer affordable homeownership options, the District should work with the City to explore limited-equity cooperative conversion for garden apartments.

- Innovative Educational Programming: Partnership opportunities between Alief Independent School District, local schools, the Westchase District, and other educational institutions like Houston Community College will grow school quality for existing and new residents. Opportunities include nature play and outdoor curricula and advanced STEM education such as robotics labs and maker spaces.

- Rebranding Local Residential: The District's recent branding work offers an opportunity to transition from the "Blue Star Certified" brand to a new, more positive brand for the area's residential complexes.

Residents expressed a desire for more homeownership options in the study area. Patio homes are dense but still offer a single-family ownership option for local families

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Continue to Implement a Multi-Functional Green Infrastructure Network

5.2 Sponsor Active Living Programming for Residents and Employees

**Hollow bullet points represent recommendations not shown on map.*

CONCEPT 5

Advance Community Health and Sustainability

Westchase District is known for its quality landscaping of the public realm and focus on trails and parks. When asked about the chief reasons that Westchase is different from other business districts, participants in the study's Steering Committee agreed that its "green" look and feel was a major reason to choose Westchase as a place to live and work. As the District continues to take action, opportunities include expanding programming opportunities associated with trails and parks, and ensuring that all landscape-designs incorporate multi-functional benefits for people and the environment.

- Multi-Functional Green Infrastructure: The District is already working to ensure that its trails and parks benefit people and the environment; the butterfly garden recently installed on the Library Loop Trail demonstrates this type of intersectional thinking. Extending this idea to all of the District's streets, parks, and trails will help create networks for habitat and stormwater management that can serve as educational opportunities for local children and points of interest for residents and visitors.

- Active Living Programming: New trails, parks, and walkable loops are all potential venues for new programming opportunities, ranging from existing group sports and running groups, to events such as "silent discos," yoga, and more. Programs don't need to be expensive to operate. For example, suggesting podcasts that match the time it should take to walk a particular path can inspire residents and employees to get out and enjoy the District's public spaces.

MULTI-FUNCTIONAL GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

A green network of walking paths, parks, and existing green spaces offers opportunities to benefit the ecosystem through habitat and stormwater- oriented improvements.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Residents, employees, property owners, businesses, developers, and public-sector stakeholders all played critical roles in defining this study's recommendations. Input from the Westchase District and other core team partners during the project's kickoff phase helped define a productive engagement strategy across these sectors. The below section describes:

- The project's public-facing engagement strategy
- The Core Team and Steering Committee who provided deeply valuable guidance throughout the course of the study
- Additional stakeholder engagement undertaken through interviews, including meetings with developers and property owners as part of a high-level market study of the area

During the Livable Centers Study kickoff phase, Westchase District leaders noted that previous planning processes had experienced low attendance at traditional public meetings. The planning team for this study therefore designed a process that combined online engagement, coordination with other local events, and interactive public events such as a tactical urbanism event and a community walking tour. These "go where people are" events achieved participation from over 100 members of the public.

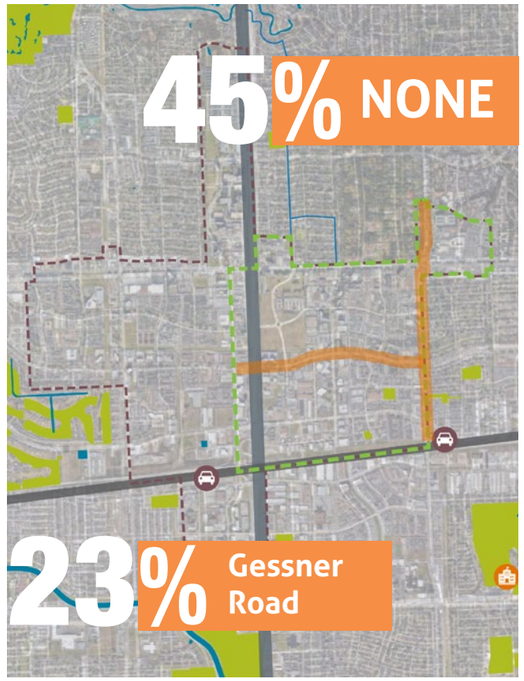
INITIAL SURVEY

Over 40 people answered an online survey during the initial months of the project that informed the project's Concept Plan. This survey was also made available in paper form at a Trails Without Trash event hosted by the Westchase District. The survey examined respondents' perceptions of important places in the District; identified streets favored for driving or walking; and asked about additional housing choices that respondents would like to see in the area. Approximately 50% of respondents were age 50 and over, which almost certainly skewed the results; two-thirds of respondents were residents of the Westchase area and one-third were employees in the area. The study team targeted other events toward youth and families in the study area to try to ensure balanced input from multiple demographics.

Respondents' favorite places and their responses about the "heart of Westchase" overwhelmingly concentrated in the Westheimer area, confirming that this street is viewed as a key mobility asset but also a center of activity. Green spaces and trails were also popular areas.

Forty-five percent of respondents answered the question "What is your favorite street to walk on in Westchase?" with the option "None, I do not walk." While the number of respondents in this survey was small and not representative of the full study area or District population, this statistic does suggest that there is significant opportunity to improve walkability in ways that generate positive health outcomes and better experiences of urban space for residents and employees.

FAVORITE STREET TO WALK ON IN WESTCHASE?



TACTICAL EVENT

The survey was followed with a tactical event that occurred on Halloween, which worked to show the potential of the Promenade recommendation while attracting children and families to give input. This event occurred along the proposed Promenade near the intersection of Briarpark Drive, and was hosted in partnership with a local multi-family garden apartment complex. To represent some of the key ideas, the study team chalked crosswalks and a section of the Promenade onto the street, and used renderings to show the potential future of the event site. Trick-or-treating was also featured to attract families.

While inclement weather limited attendance at this event to about 20 participants, residents who were able to participate praised the concept of the Promenade. They also expressed enthusiasm for incremental pedestrian improvements at local apartment complexes; the District's existing trail networks; and habitat improvements such as butterfly gardens.

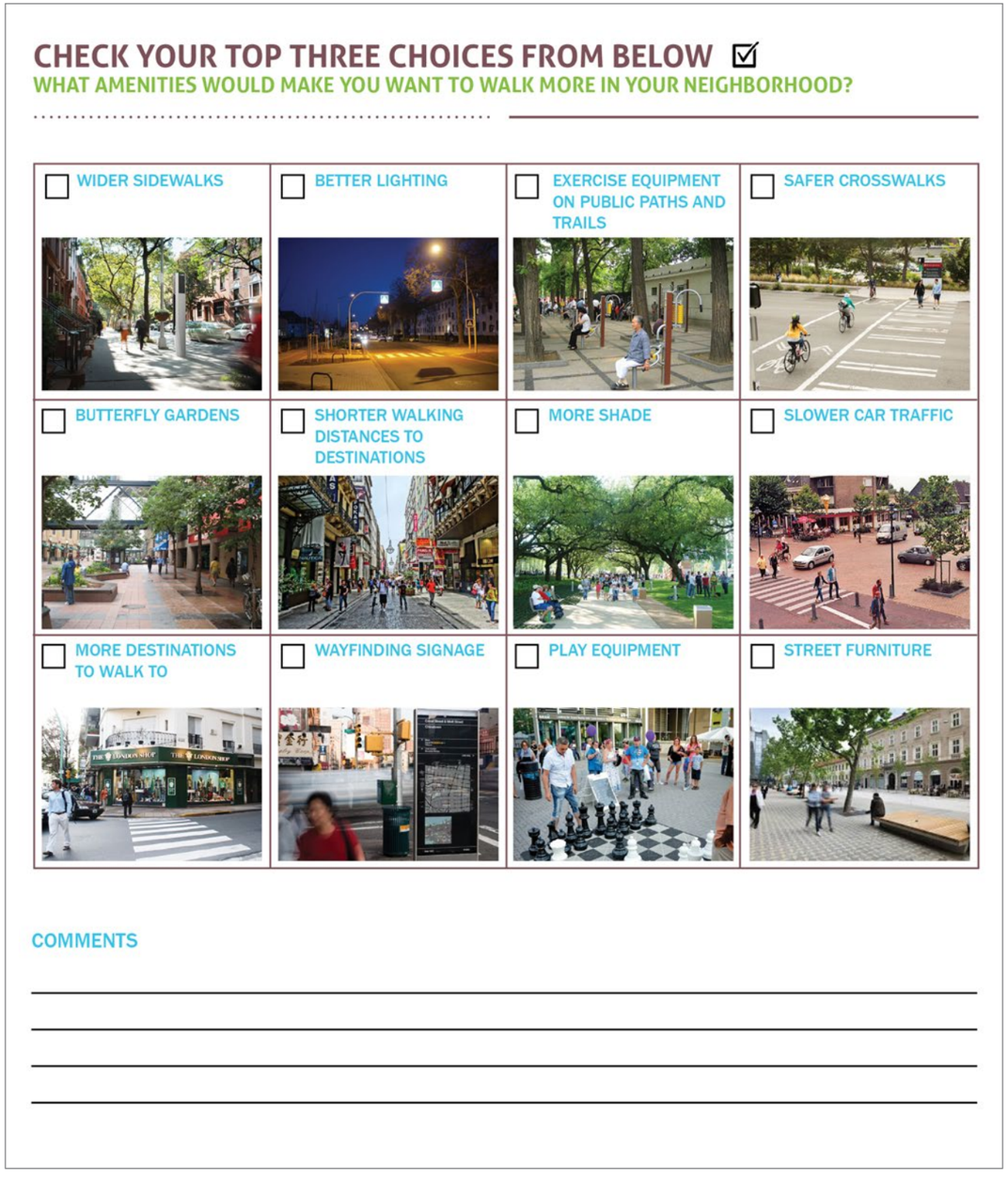
ADDITIONAL SURVEY AND INFORMATIONAL EVENT

The study team attended the Westchase District Farmers' Market to provide information about the study using a one-page document. The team also administered a second survey that asked attendees about specific amenities that could best improve walkability in the study area. Thirty-six total participants took the survey, and the results are documented in the following table.

SURVEY RESULTS: PREFERRED WALKABILITY AMENITIES

AMENITY	VOTES
Better Lighting	14
More Destinations to Walk To	14
More Shade	13
Butterfly Gardens	11
Shorter Walking Distances to Destinations	11
Slower Car Traffic	10
Wider Sidewalks	9
Exercise Equipment on Public Paths and Trails	9
Safer Crosswalks	8
Play Equipment	6
Street Furniture	5
Wayfinding Signage	2

SURVEY DOCUMENT



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: CORE TEAM AND STEERING COMMITTEE

CORE TEAM

The Core Team of client and stakeholder representatives for this project included representatives of Westchase District, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, and the City of Houston. These Core Team members were essential components of the study team. Their work on the project included:

- Participating in regular bi-weekly calls to guide the project
- Recruiting members for the Steering Committee and arranging the Steering Committee meetings described below
- Editing and guiding all report and presentation content throughout the study process
- Attending public-facing events for the project
- Providing insight on essential parties to interview throughout the process, making connections to these parties, and attending many of the interviews conducted for the study

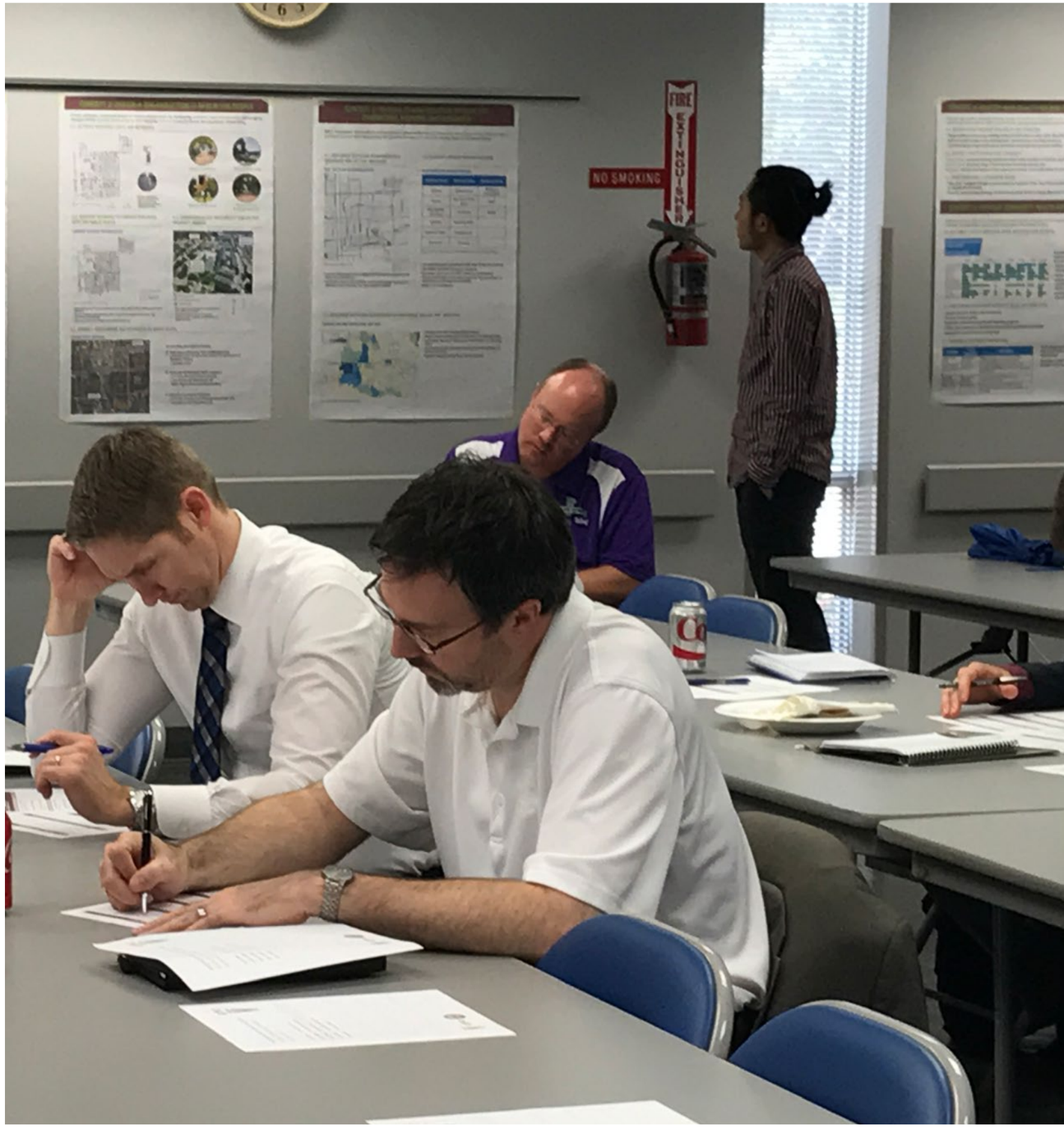
STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee comprised of local residents, property owners, property managers, employers, non-profits, public-sector agencies, Westchase District employees and board members, school board officials, and others provided invaluable insight into conditions in the study area and proposed recommendations.

The project team met with the Steering Committee three times. The first meeting occurred in July 2017; this meeting focused on examining the study team's existing conditions analysis, as well as discussing an initial draft of five plan concepts to improve their focus and impact. The second meeting, in September 2017, provided the Steering Committee with a list of potential recommendations and a rationale for each recommendation. The Committee provided direct feedback on the content of each recommendation, and assisted the study team in thinking about phasing and prioritizing the final action plan.

The final Steering Committee meeting occurred in November 2017. At this meeting, Steering Committee members worked with the study team to build an implementation strategy for an updated and improved list of recommendations. Their ideas have been directly incorporated into this report.

The study team thanks all of the Core Team and Steering Committee members for devoting their time, knowledge, and perspective to inform and improve this study. As future implementers of the recommendations, these stakeholders are informed, motivated, and ready to contribute to building the future Westchase District and study area.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: MARKET STUDY AND INTERVIEWS

The Westchase District had already completed a series of high-quality plans prior to this Livable Centers Study effort. To ensure that this study would build on these plans and not repeat their outcomes, the consultant team asked the Core Team about topics they felt needed to be further explored in the study area. The answer from the team was clear and insightful.

- First, the Core Team wanted the study team to find highly tactical and tangible strategies for public-sector action that would bring the private-sector to the table in developing mixed-use, walkable places. Previous plans, as well as local and national trends in development, point toward this type of placemaking as a critical component of the District's future competitiveness as a job center in Houston.
- Second, they wanted the plan's strategies to combine big, impactful ideas with smaller, incremental projects in order to improve the quality of life in the study area.
- Third, they were looking for ways to add housing options and amenities that would encourage local employees to live in the District, while also retaining and improving quality of life for the diverse group of residents already living in the study area.

In order to ensure that the study's recommendations would be efficient and effective in exciting private-sector interest, the study team conducted a high-level market study. Part of this study included interviews with property owners in the Westchase District and developers from across Houston. The interviewees included owners of retail properties; notable mixed-use developers; office property owners; owners of vacant properties in the study area; Class A housing developers; property managers for local garden apartment complexes; and Westchase District communications and operations staff, who work closely with local property owners and managers. Their thoughts helped the study team make key decisions about recommending and locating big, impactful projects like the proposed Promenade and signature parks. They also helped to determine how to develop a market for new housing options while retaining the well-maintained housing inventory in place today.

The Livable Centers study team thanks all market study participants for devoting time and attention to this study.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The existing conditions analysis for this report examines data to reveal challenges and opportunities in the following areas:

- Housing and Real Estate
- Transportation
- Urban Design
- Education
- Health and Sustainability

Each section uses data, mapping, and stakeholder input where appropriate to show where targeted interventions by Westchase District and its partners may be most impactful. The concepts and recommendations in this study were shaped by the information gathered in this Existing Conditions analysis.

Housing and Real Estate

The study area's housing stock enjoys numerous advantages. The variety of cost-appropriate housing options within the area accommodates a diverse mix of residents. While building quality in many naturally affordable areas of Houston have deteriorated over time, the Westchase community's efforts have ensured good maintenance of housing in the District. The lack of flooding in the study area during Hurricane Harvey also illustrates the resilience of its housing stock; anecdotal and occupancy evidence suggests that many apartments in the study area and District are now home to residents displaced from elsewhere in the region.

However, despite having a mix of housing, office, and retail land uses, the area currently does not function as a live-work environment. The vast majority of residents commute elsewhere for work, and the majority of employees commute in from other areas of west Houston and Fort Bend County. In addition, much of the study area's existing housing was constructed during the 1970s and 1980s, when the gated multi-family garden apartment typology was very popular. This typology encourages use of large swaths of land for surface parking and tends to include many vehicle-only access points. Evidence shows that walkable, mixed-use, live-work environments confer health benefits on residents[1], command increased values for all types of building stock[2], and provide environmental benefits due to decreased automobile travel.

The existing conditions analysis and market study suggest that Westchase needs to add new housing options to its current garden apartments in order to promote a live-work environment and attract employees to the study area. Local stakeholders expressed interest in supporting additional housing typologies, including homeownership options; mixed-use and denser multifamily typologies that reduce surface parking and encourage walkability; and single-family options such as patio homes.

[1] *https://www.cdc.gov/features/walk-friendly-communities/index.html*

[2] *https://urbanland.uli.org/sustainability/houston-economic-case-walkability/*

Garden style apartment complexes are prevalent in the study area

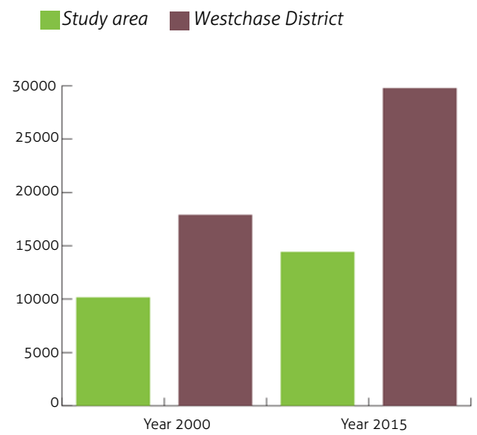
GROWING POPULATIONS

Population in both the study area and broader Westchase District has steadily increased since 2000. The study area currently has 14,429 residents, representing a 40% increase of population between 2000 and 2015. The District has seen a 60% increase of population during the same timeframe, with a total current population of 29,779.

40% *Increase in study area population between 2000 and 2015.*

60% *Increase in Westchase District population between 2000 and 2015.*

POPULATION CHANGE FROM 2000 TO 2015
Source: 2010-2015 American Community Survey Data



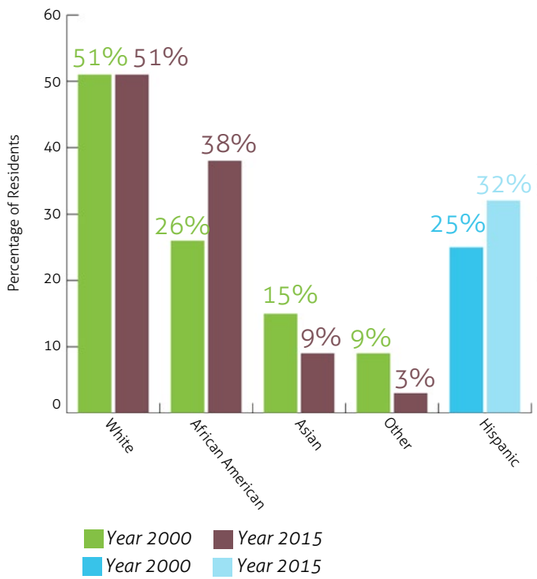
A DIVERSE MIX OF RESIDENTS

CHANGING, BUT STILL DIVERSE

While the study area remains diverse, the population has changed over time with an increase in African-American and Hispanic populations and a decline in the percentage of Asian residents between 2000 and 2015.

RACE AND ETHNICITY COMPARISON WITHIN THE STUDY AREA IN 2000 AND 2015

Source: 2000 Census and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Data



12%

Relative Growth in African-American Population

7%

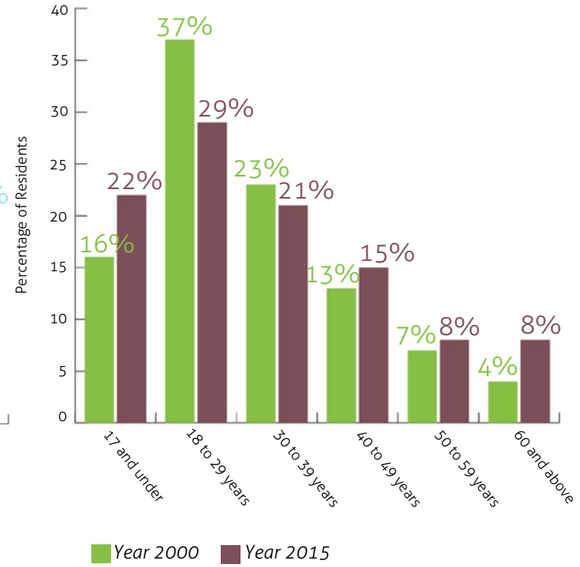
Relative Growth in Hispanic Population

YOUNG, MOBILE RESIDENTS

Young adults in their twenties and thirties remain a large percentage of the study area population between 2000 (60%) and 2015 (50%). Children and seniors are still a relatively small percentage of the study area's population, however, decline in the 18-39 age range indicates more efforts are needed at keeping young, mobile residents in the area.

AGE GROUPS COMPARISON WITHIN THE STUDY AREA IN 2000 AND 2015

Source: 2000 Census and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Data



RESIDENT INCOMES

Median household income in the study area has risen 10% since 2000 (from $35,428 to $38,982) which is comparable to the slight increase in the District (from $36,730 to $38,982), yet is below median incomes of the City of Houston ($45,728) and the Harris County ($53,822). But overall, the study area has a good mix of residents with income levels distributed in all ends. More households earn incomes at the higher (4% increase) and lower ends (8% increase) of the income spectrum today than in 2000.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME REGIONAL COMPARISON, 2015

Source: 2015 Census

Area	Median Household Income in 2015
Westchase	$37,000
Study area	$38,982
City of Houston	$45,728
Harris County	$53,822
West Houston	$60,489

8%

Increase in households in poverty

4%

Growth in households earning >$100,000

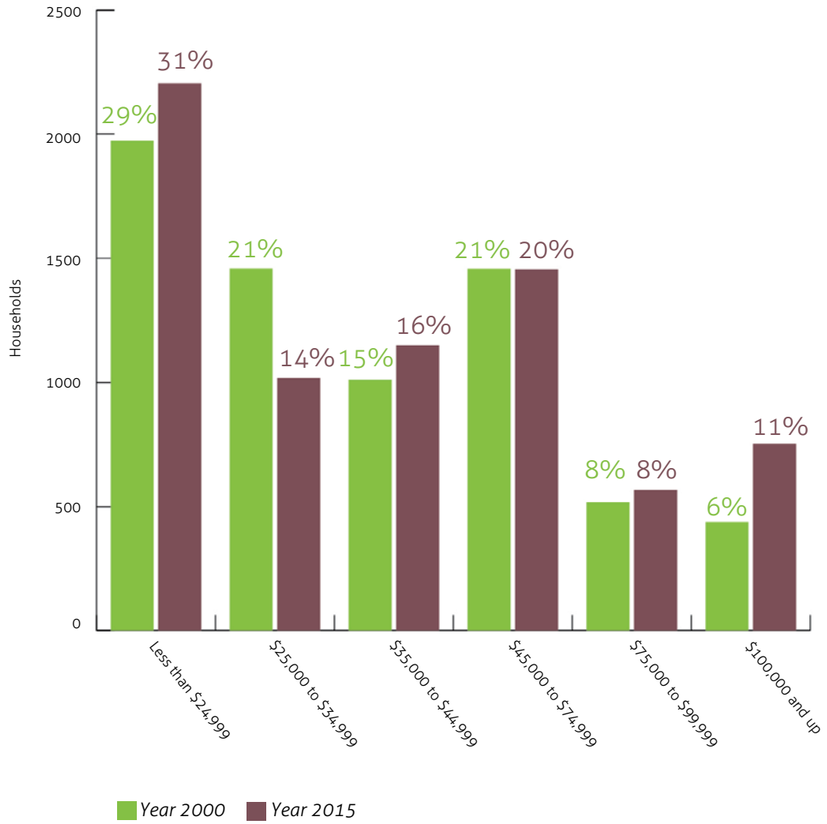
MEDIAN INCOME CHANGE, 2000-2015

Source: 2000 Census, 2015 Census

The study area has a large percentage of low-income residents, but is also seeing growth in high-income populations, with little change in the percentage of middle-income households over time. In both 2000 and 2015, nearly one-third of study area households earned less than $25,000 per year. In 2015, however, the percentage of households earning more than $100,000 in the study area nearly doubled compared to the year 2000. While the total percentage of households earning over $100,000 remains small (11%, compared to 6% in 2000), the growth may reflect increased demand for urban living among the area's employees.

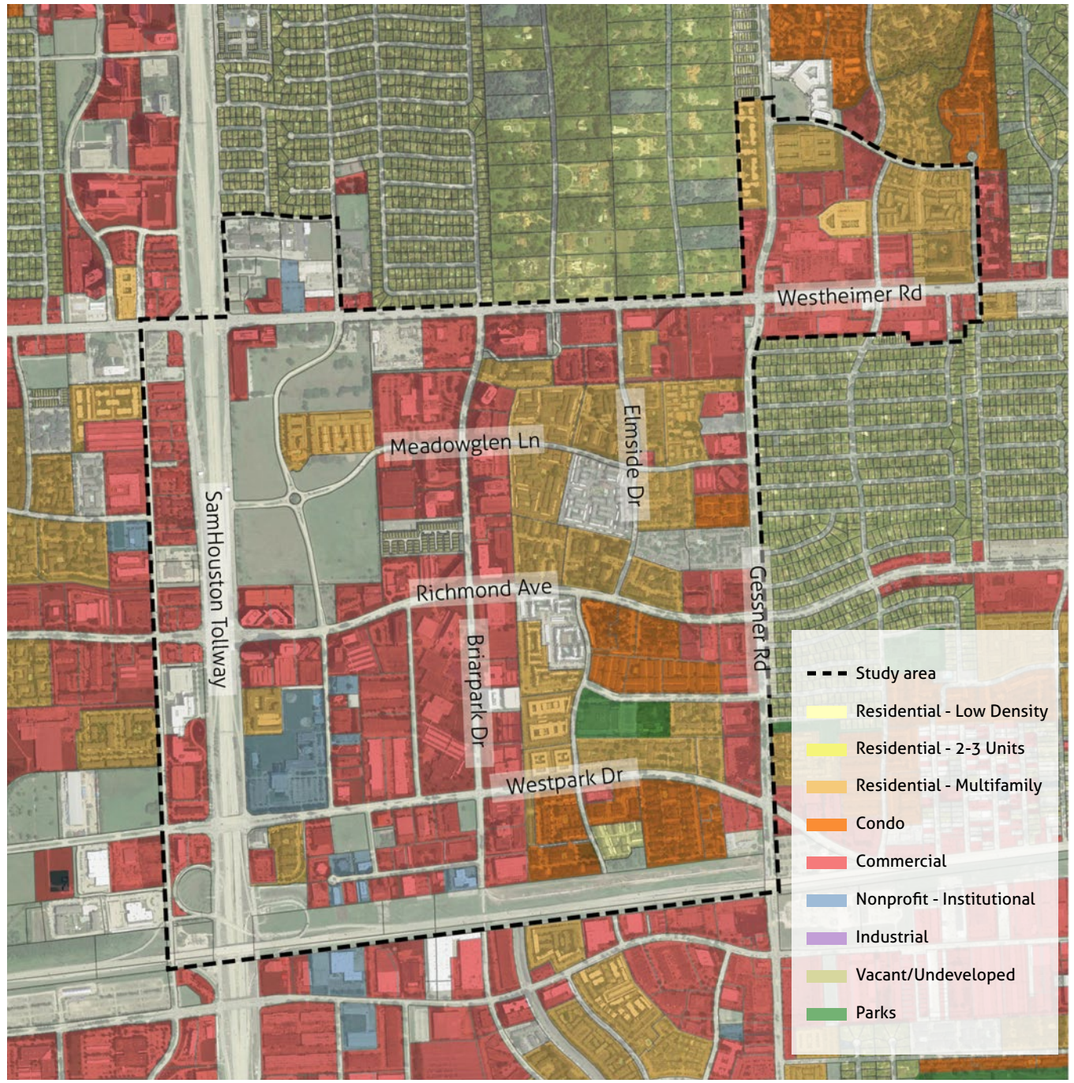
As noted, the percentage of households in the middle-income brackets has remained relatively steady, with the exception of the $25,000-$34,999 bracket: 21% of households earned between $25,000 and $34,999 in 2000, which fell to 14% in 2015. The percentage distribution of households in the next three income brackets is very similar in 2000 and 2015 - 15% and 16% respectively in the $35,000-$44,999 bracket, 21% and 20% respectively in the $45,000-$74,999 bracket, and 8% in both years in the $75,000-$99,999 bracket.

INCOME MIX COMPARISON WITHIN THE STUDY AREA IN 2000 AND 2015
Source: 2000 Census, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Data



Land use in the study area is a mix of multi-family residential, office, retail, institutional, and light industrial commercial properties. While uses are mixed at the district level, few properties include a mix of commercial and residential uses within the same site.

MAP: LAND USE



Data Source: HCAD

The Land Use map of the study area on the previous page shows that the largest share of land area is commercial (43%). A large part of the commercial land use is the many office buildings in the area. Retail is concentrated along the Westheimer corridor, including the Carillon shopping mall with restaurants, cafes, a salon, and professional services, and the Kroger grocery store to its east.

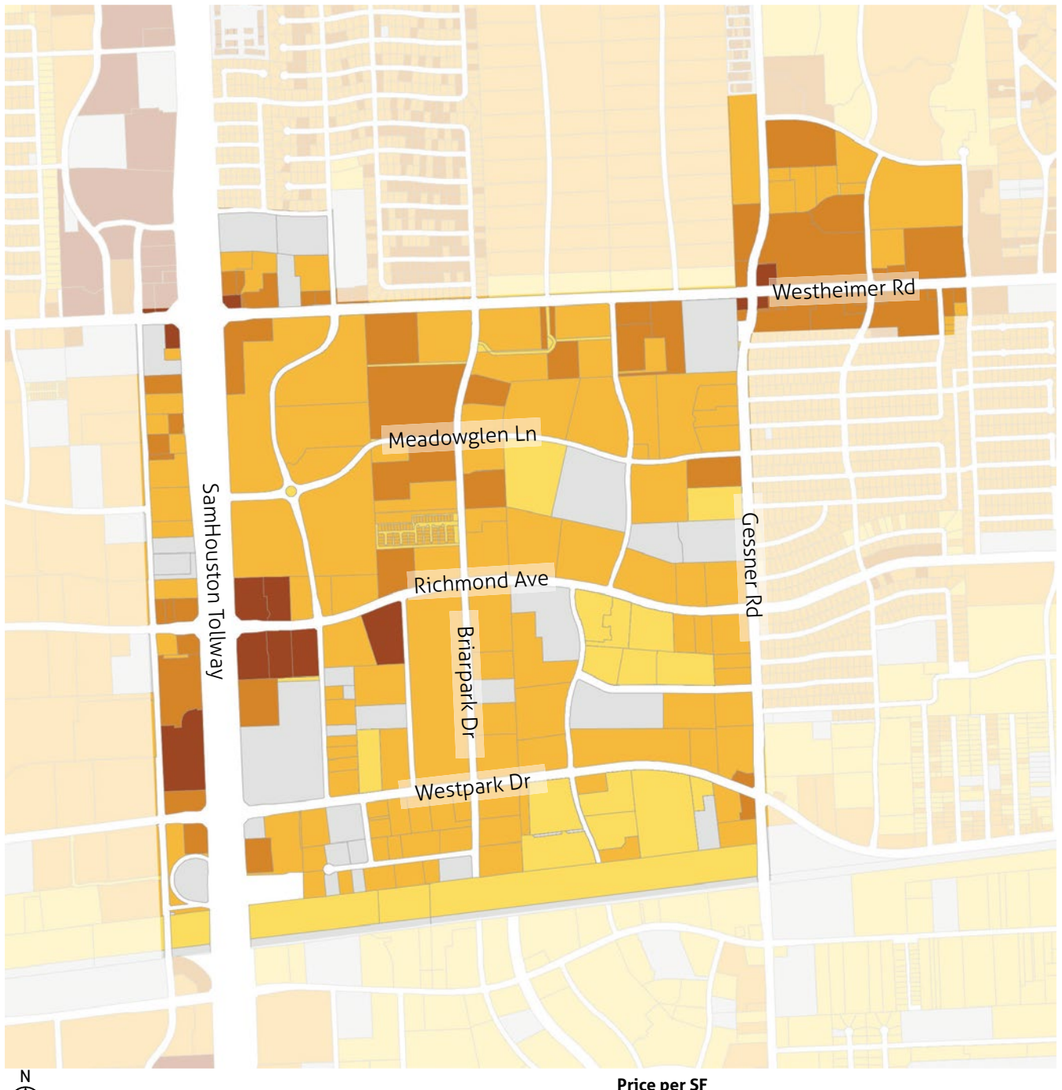
The second largest share of land area is residential (31%) distributed in multi-family residential apartments, condominiums, and low to medium density residential that are prevalent in the eastern section of the study area. Several non-profit organizations make up 3% of the area, industrial area take up (4%), and the remaining area is vacant or undeveloped (17%). There is a very small area dedicated for parks and open space (1%). In terms of ownership, The West 8 property, Carillon Shopping Center, and the Texan Western office tract are three of the largest tracts with single or affiliated ownership in the study area. West 8 constitutes the largest concentration of vacant land in the study area, as seen in the northwest corner of the vacant land map below.

The majority of the study area has been governed by protective covenants since 1974 that establish permitted land uses, architectural and design features, building setbacks, parking facilities, landscaping, signs, and maintenance features. Current permitted land uses are office, commercial processing, research, servicing, light industrial, manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution. Uses explicitly prohibited unless Westchase Community Association approves in writing are restaurants, fueling stations, motor hotels, financial institutions, and retail.

MAP: VACANT LAND

According to data from the Harris County Appraisal District, office properties near the Sam Houston Tollway have the highest land value, at over $50 per square foot. Residential land is valued between $5 and $25 per square foot. The land value of several retail properties along Westheimer has decreased over the last five years, suggesting that redevelopment along this major corridor should be a priority.

Data Source: *HCAD*

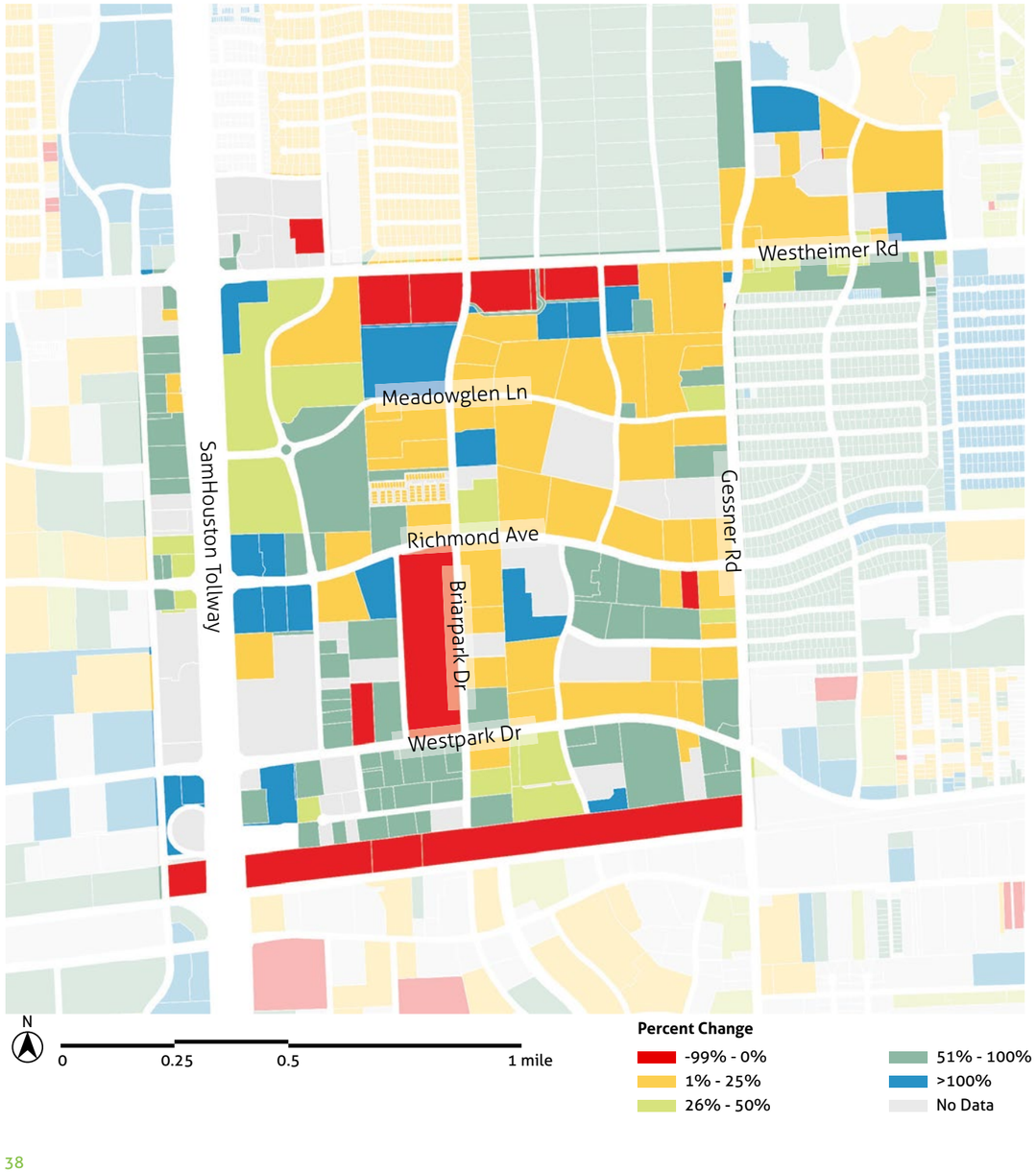


LAND VALUE CHANGE

Land value in the study area has largely increased over the five-year period between 2012 and 2017, based on data from the Harris County Appraisal District. However, several commercial properties on Westheimer and a large office property on Briarpark have seen declining values. Westheimer Road should be a valuable location for commercial investment. While some of the declining values for property in that area may be due to depreciation, their reduction in value suggests a need for catalytic interventions on Westheimer to help further economic development in the study area.

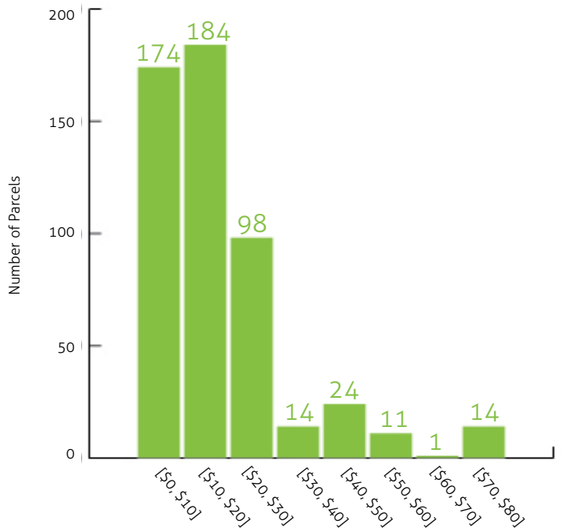
Data Source: HCAD

MAP: FIVE-YEAR LAND VALUE CHANGE



COMMERCIAL LAND VALUES WITHIN THE STUDY AREA, 2017 ($ PER SF)

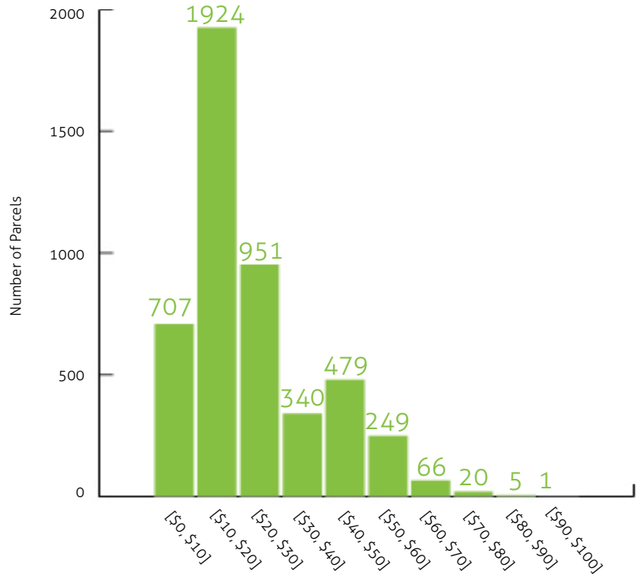
Source: HCAD 2017 Parcel Data



According to the HCAD 2017 Parcel Data, most commercial parcels within the study area are valued between $0 and $30 per square foot (SF), similar to the Westchase District as a whole. The median land value of commercial parcels in the study area is $14.99 per SF, compared to $14.86 per SF in the District overall.

RESIDENTIAL LAND VALUES WITHIN THE STUDY AREA, 2017 ($ PER SF)

Source: HCAD 2017 Parcel Data



Most residential parcels within the study area are valued between $0-$30 per SF, similar to the Westchase District as a whole. However, there are also a significant number of parcels valued between $30 and $60 per SF. The median land value of residential parcels in the study area is $17.04 per SF, significantly higher than the District at $12.28 per SF.

The ratio of a property's improvement value to its land value provides a basic, broad-brush metric of redevelopment potential. The lower the improvement value to land value ratio, the more susceptible the property is for redevelopment due to its poor maintenance, age, or vacancy. Areas that appear primed for redevelopment according to the map below include the vacant West 8 property and lower-value properties in the southwest study area. Properties near the Westheimer corridor have surprisingly high redevelopment potential, given the street's high traffic counts and valuable location.

MAP: REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Data Source: HCAD

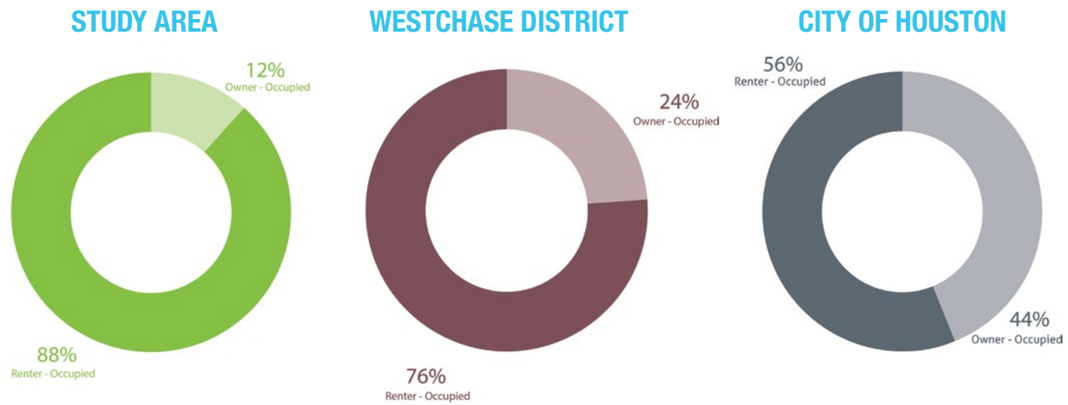
HOUSING TENURE AND OCCUPANCY

The study area is more heavily renter-occupied than the Westchase District as a whole and the City of Houston. In the study area, 88% of residents rent their homes, while 76% of residents are renters in the Westchase District, and 56% in the City of Houston. This scenario presents a challenge as renters are usually more vulnerable to displacement due to shifting market conditions than homeowners. Exploring the possibilities for increasing homeownership in the study area is thus an area of opportunity.

The occupancy rate of the study area is on par with the City as a whole (88%). Post-Harvey, the occupancy rate increased to maximum as many residents from other parts of the City moved to Westchase District due to the area's flood-free residential areas.

HOUSING TENURE WITHIN THE STUDY AREA, 2011-2015
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Data

Renters in study area *Renters in Houston*



Occupancy Rate for study area *Occupancy Rate for City*

HOUSING STOCK CHARACTERISTICS

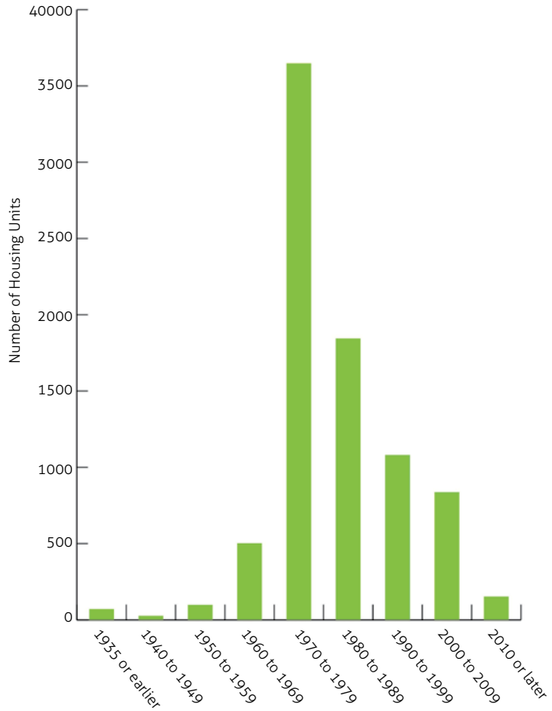
The study area contains nearly half (48%) of all the housing units in the Westchase District. Many of these units are the result of a building boom in the 1970s-1980s. The District has conducted ongoing engagement efforts with property owners, ensuring that most of the complexes remain in good repair and are more attractive to tenants than many in surrounding neighborhoods.

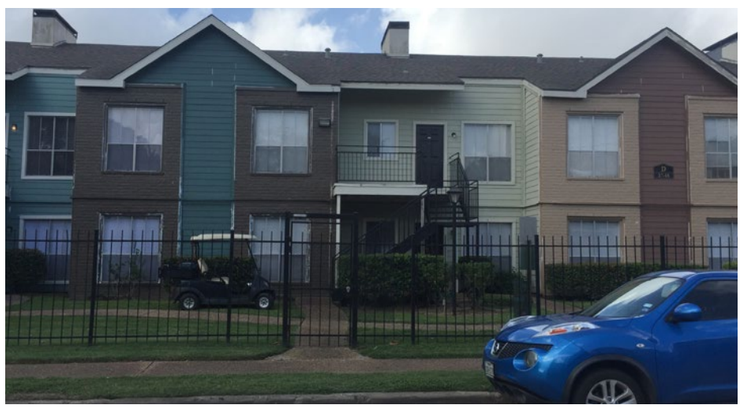
48% *of all housing units in the Westchase District are located in the study area.*

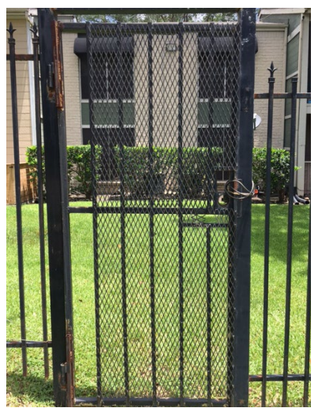
67% *of all housing units in the study area were constructed 1970-1989.*

HOUSING UNIT AGE WITHIN THE STUDY AREA, 2011-2015

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Data







Poor siting of pedestrian entrances in the gated communities are barriers for walkability in the community

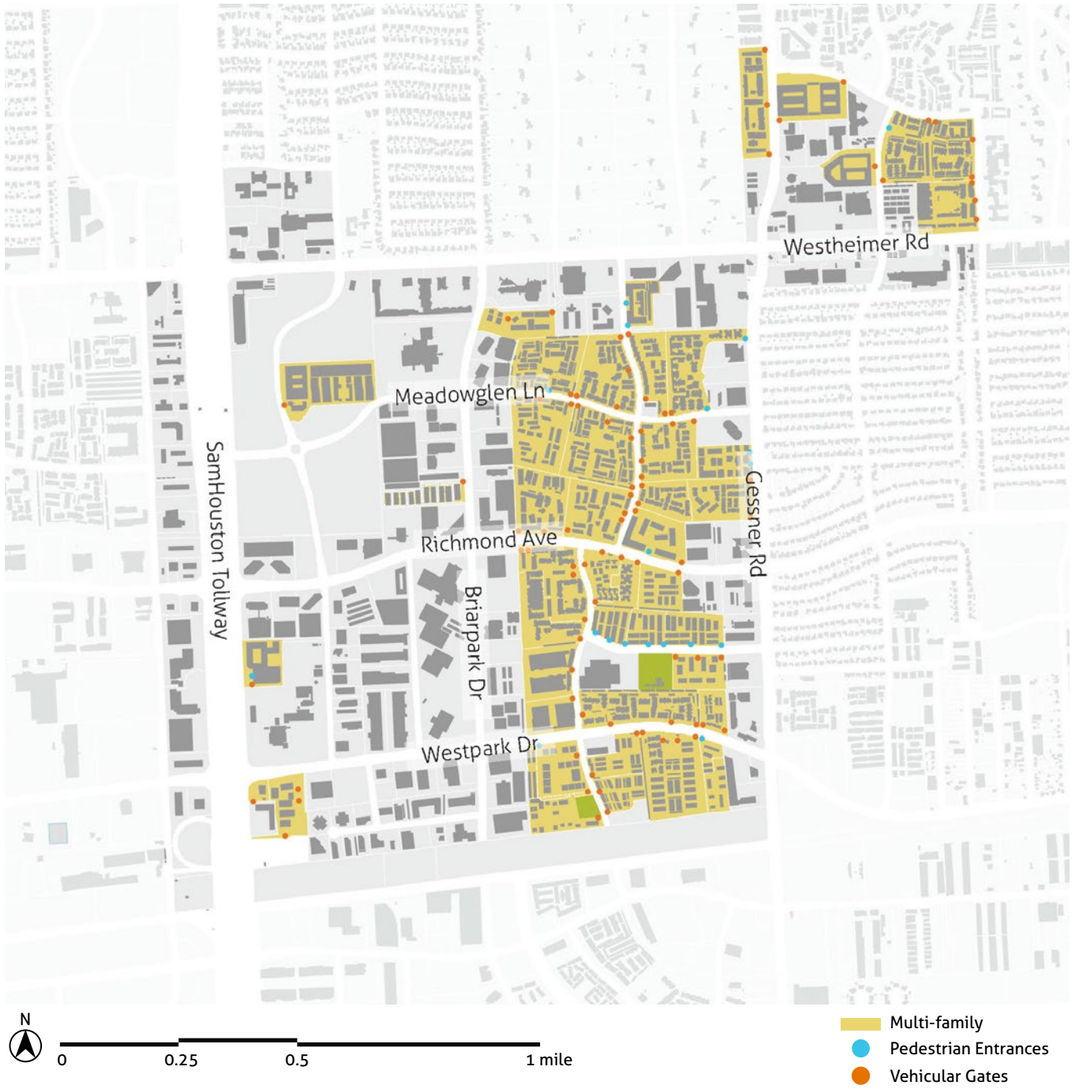
GARDEN APARTMENTS

There are several housing typologies in the study area, but multi-family garden apartments with fencing and interior parking are most common. The eastern section of the study area is almost entirely comprised of such multi-family garden apartments, and three complexes are present in the western section. According to the Westchase District Mobility Plan, the design encourages residents to use their car for any trip, even a short one down the street.

[3] *http://www.westchasedistrict.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Westchase-Mobility-Report-Final-Report-Compressed.pdf*

Data Source: HCAD

MAP: MULTIFAMILY GARDEN APARTMENTS

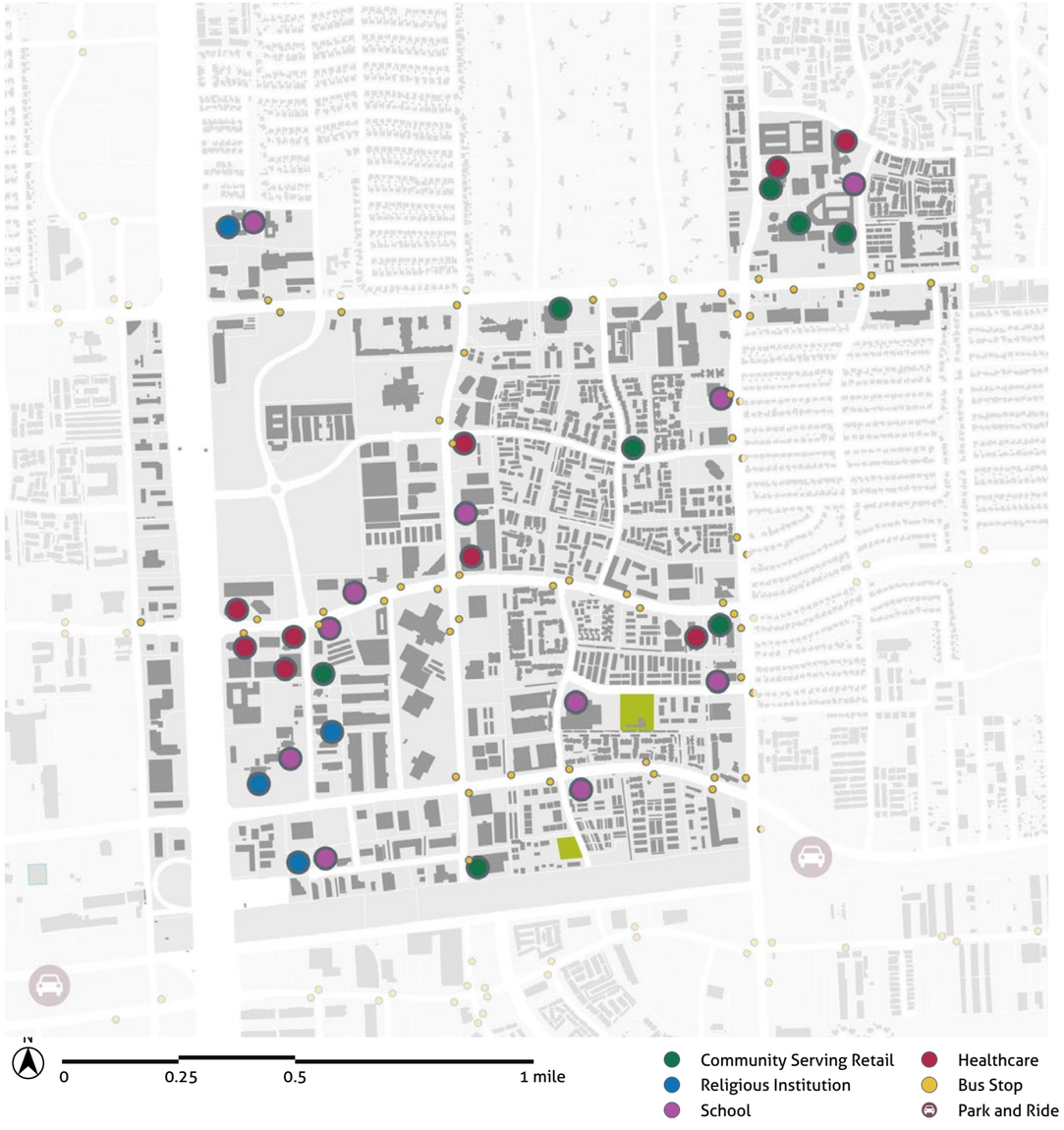


STRONG COMMUNITY SERVICES

One of the strengths of the study area is that fresh food, religious services, community centers, schools, shopping, and bus stops are available in the proximity of the apartment complexes. Many of them are in walking distance, but the absence of pedestrian entrances in proper locations of the apartment complexes hinder the residents from accessing these services on foot. Furthermore, the study area lacks any branding or wayfinding signage that informs residents or visitors of the presence of these services.

Data Source: HCAD

MAP: COMMUNITY SERVICES



The garden apartments in Westchase are well-maintained, and nearly all have high occupancy rates; 88% of all units in the study area are occupied. These garden apartments provide a valuable stock of reasonably-priced housing in a convenient location for families and young professionals. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these apartments are a first stop for many young professionals obtaining jobs in Houston, as well as an attractive option for a diverse group of families from many countries and backgrounds. The Westchase Community Association covenants have helped preserve these complexes, and committed property managers maintain them well, which will help ensure their preservation. Few of these complexes appear at all likely to redevelop based on the redevelopment potential test shown on page 40 of this report. This indicates strong prospects for long-term naturally occurring affordability in the study area and District.

However, when young professionals receive a raise and want to move to a complex with more amenities, or when families grow and want to purchase a home, the study area offers few options. This hampers the District's ability to promote a live-work environment for many current employees and reduces the number of employees who commute into the area. While not every employee will choose to live in the District, providing a mix of housing option will make Westchase an attractive place to live for its current employee base, as well as for new employees looking to move closer to their jobs in the District.

Developers and property owners consulted as part of the market study effort noted that Class A apartments in and near the study area commanded lower rents overall than apartments elsewhere, as well as having lower occupancy rates. Many developers therefore held less interest in adding new Class A development in the area, particularly during the oil slump that strongly affected demand for new Class A rental units. However, this picture abruptly changed after Hurricane Harvey, which occurred during the study process. The study area and its adjacent Class A apartments did not flood, and occupancy rates in these buildings shot up to nearly 100%. This represents an opportunity for the District to keep this population in the area and prove the local Class A market by showcasing existing amenities and continuing to develop new landmarks in the area.

Homeownership development in the District was also a difficult proposition, according to developers consulted for the study. Costs to acquire property are high, since the area is largely built out. Sale prices, meanwhile, are not high enough to justify the opportunity cost of building in the study area rather than somewhere else. Opportunities to further homeownership development included:

- Improving school quality to attract families, which would also benefit existing residents.
- Identifying vacant and low-cost properties and ensuring developers are aware of potential opportunities to purchase.
- Adding amenities such as parks, open spaces, and retail.

MARKET STUDY CONCLUSIONS: RETAIL

EXAMPLE OF RETAIL IN THE STUDY AREA

Source: Google Maps

Three major components influencing retail development are:

- Accessibility and visibility. Traffic counts and nearby population are important to retailers. Visibility of signage and storefronts is also crucial. Westchase District is a convenient location with high traffic counts and an active daytime population. The Westheimer and Gessner corridors provide strong visibility for retailers, but a lack of visual coherence can harm the perception of retail quality.
- Community characteristics. According to property owners, the study area's relatively low household incomes and rates of homeownership can discourage retail tenants. Rather than displace existing populations, however, there are opportunities to add new population in surrounding areas that will help improve retail amenities for everyone.
- Locations of competitive retailers. One large property owner in the area noted that many big-box stores are already located nearby, hampering the ability of the District to attract larger-format retailers.

The nature of retail is also evolving nationwide due to the vastly increased presence of online shopping in the marketplace. Local chains offering standard consumer goods have often struggled based on the availability of lower-cost online products that can be delivered quickly.

All of these factors suggest a need to add mixed-use development with storefronts that can carry unique and local products. Offering an attractive, walkable, urban experience can help bring quality retailers to the study area and reduce competition from online shopping.

MARKET STUDY CONCLUSIONS: OFFICE

OFFICE AND PARKING STRUCTURES IN THE STUDY AREA

Source: Westchase District

Houston's office market has long had a significant presence in the city's core. However, the price of crude oil not only affects the bottom line of employers, it also affects the local office real estate market. Since 2014, the price of crude oil has continually dropped, and vacancies have risen. Coupled with slower than average job growth, Houston's office market was hit fairly hard in the past few years.

As recently as summer of 2017, the Houston Business Journal reported that "[a]ll in all, Houston's office market appears to be stabilizing." Two months later, Houston faced one of the worst natural disasters in history as Hurricane Harvey poured over 50 inches of rain and flooded many of the city's previously flood-proof areas. The study area remained virtually unscathed by the rainfall, while many competing business districts continue to grapple with the aftermath of the flooding.

Since Hurricane Harvey, Westchase District has attracted the interest of more large employers from the region. One new tenant has recently leased over 100,000 square feet and brought 450 employees with them. This type of growth is expected to continue. The H-GAC Regional Growth Model projects job density in the district to nearly double by 2040.

The study area's position off IH-10 and at the intersection of the Westpark Tollway and Sam Houston Tollway is another factor contributing to job growth projections. Employees who live outside of the area often commute in from Katy and Sugar Land, but the strong regional connections create direct access to many potential employees.

Transportation

Westchase District's convenient location at the intersection of two major regional highways -- Westpark Tollway and the Sam Houston Tollway -- has been a major advantage for the District's growth in jobs and residential development. However, as the number of jobs in the area continues to grow, traffic and congestion have become an increasing problem on these highways and major local collectors including Westheimer Road, Richmond Avenue, and Westpark Drive.

Westchase District is already making advances in encouraging alternative transportation, including new bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Continuing this pattern of investment, and connecting across barriers such as highways and high-traffic roadways, will be critical to the future of this work.

Two METRO park-and-rides, including the Gessner park-and-ride and the Westchase park-and-ride, are located near the study area as well. Yet these park-and-rides have seen decreasing usage as the fringe of Houston's urban development has expanded. Opportunities exist to encourage additional rapid transit and transit-oriented development in the study area.

STREET NETWORK

Westheimer Road is Houston's east-west 'main street' and the most heavily-traveled thoroughfare in the study area, with volumes of up to 70,000 vehicles per day near Sam Houston Tollway (Westchase District Mobility Plan, 2016). This vital corridor also carries the highest ridership bus route in Texas -- Westheimer 82 -- averaging over 13,000 trips per weekday (METRO Ridership Summary, 2017). The two other major thoroughfares in the study area are Gessner Road, which forms the eastern boundary of the study area, and Richmond Avenue, which bisects the study area in an east and west direction. Both carry approximately 34,000 vehicles per day (Westchase District Mobility Plan, 2016).

Two major highways ring most of the study area and significantly interrupt the local street network: Sam Houston Tollway on the west and Westpark Tollway on the south. Traffic therefore overwhelms the three major east-west thoroughfares that cross Sam Houston Tollway.

MAP: TRAFFIC VOLUMES

(Westheimer Road, Richmond Avenue, and Westpark Drive) and the three north-south surface roads that cross the Westpark Tollway (Rogerdale Road, Briarpark Drive, and Gessner Road). In addition, limited connectivity across thoroughfares in the study area's street network forces more automobile trips onto these major roadways rather than dispersing trips and reducing congestion.

Crashes are most frequent on Westheimer Road and Gessner Road, particularly near signalized intersections and highway underpasses (Westchase District Ped-Bike Plan, 2016).

LOCAL BUS NETWORK

METRO's System Reimagining initiative in 2015 overhauled the local bus network into a grid of more linear routes organized by three service frequencies. Within the Westchase District Livable Centers' study area, the changes have resulted in the upgrading of three 30-minute bus routes (blue) into high-frequency routes (red) with 6-10 minute frequencies during peak-hour travel and 15 minute frequencies on off-peak (Routes Westheimer 82, Richmond 25, and Gessner 46) and additional express routes at the Gessner Park and Ride (151) and through Briarpark Drive (153) that connect the area to regional employment centers.

This local transit network provides choices for study area residents. 95% of residents commute to work outside the study area, and use transit at a rate nearly three times more than Houston commuters overall -- 6.6% compared to 2.2% (U.S. Census Bureau LEHD Inflow/ Outflow Analysis, 2015). This is mainly due to low vehicle ownership in the study area; 72% of households own one vehicle or less, compared to 53% of households within the City of Houston (U.S. Census Bureau 5-Year Estimates, 2015).

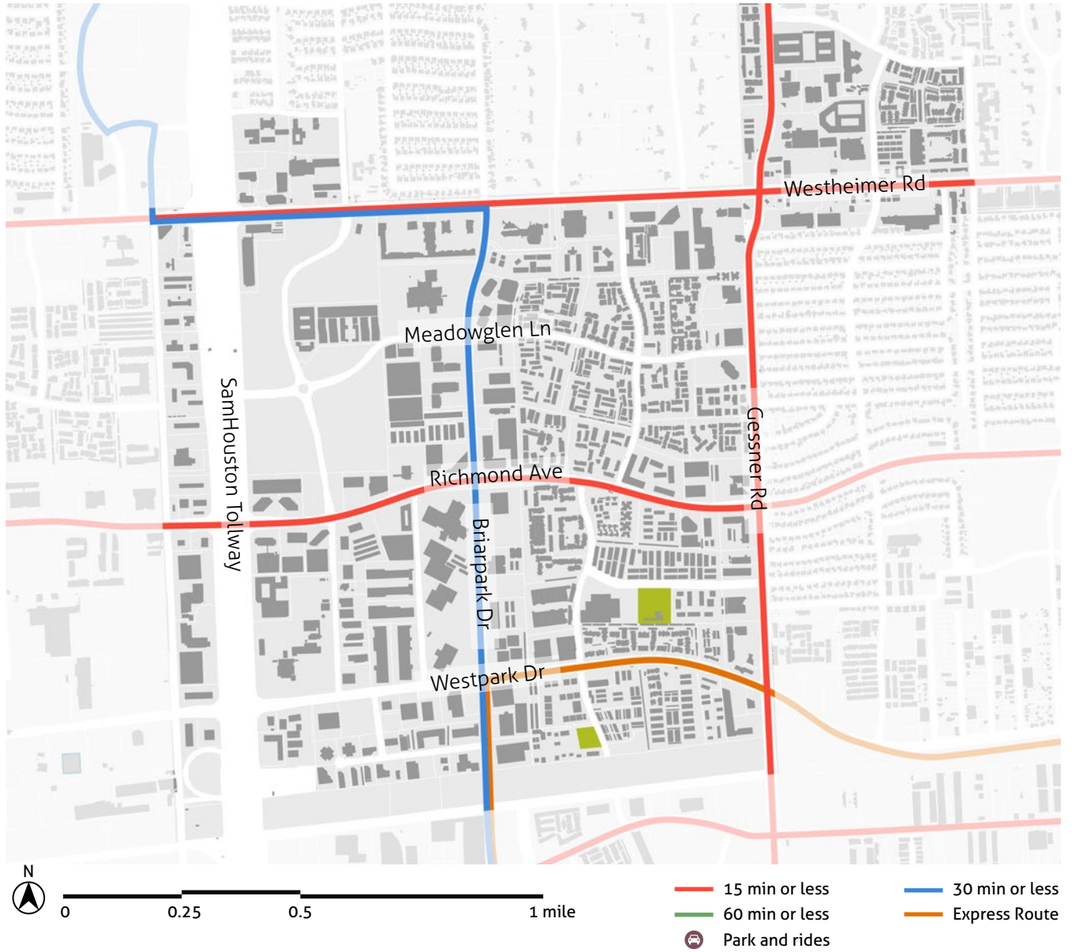
Moreover, the study area is housing workforce for various other employment areas in West Houston as 63% of residents commute to a job within ten miles (U.S. Census Bureau LEHD Distance/ Direction Analysis, 2015).

WALKING AND BIKING

Walking to transit and neighborhood amenities is one of the study area's most significant challenges. Superblocks spanning over 1,000 feet are close to four times the size of the 270-foot blocks in Midtown and Downtown Houston. Long blocks mean fewer intersections,

MAP: BUS ROUTES BEFORE SYSTEM REIMAGINING

MAP: BUS ROUTES AFTER SYSTEM REIMAGINING



which makes walking trips longer, encouraging people to drive even for trips that are short "as the crow flies." For example, a neighborhood grocery store located 500 feet from an apartment would be a 2-minute walk for residents in a direct walking path, but in reality is closer to 15-minutes, due to the disconnected street network. Targeted pedestrian enhancements that 'bust' long blocks or large properties can expand the 10 minute walkshed known as the comfortable walking range for the average person on foot, and cover a larger share of the half-mile radii -- the commensurate distance for a 10 minute walk given a traditional pattern of streets and intersections.

The intersection of Gessner and Westheimer presents a major conflict point between people walking and biking with automobiles. It is also one of the highest volume transfer points in the transit network. METRO has identified the location as a BRT station to serve a future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route on the Westheimer corridor where crash rates are 179% higher than the state average for similar roadways (Westchase District Mobility Plan, 2016). The intersection at Gessner Road presents a crossing of 125 ft. and pedestrian timing signals designed to prioritize high volumes of traffic on both thoroughfares. Any future redesign of the intersection and of these two streets should balance the safety and travel time needs of pedestrian, cyclists and people with disabilities, with the travel time savings often prioritized for motorists. A walkable intersection design would allow safer crossing for the benefit of everyone by reducing the number and severity of crashes in the area.

The Houston Bike Plan, approved by City Council in March 2017, includes eleven short- and long-term recommendations for the Westchase District Livable Centers study area. One project, the Gessner Briarpark Off-street Trail along Westpark's utility corridor, is wrapping up construction. The remaining recommendations are mostly a combination of dedicated on-street right of ways and off-street trails. Projects are:

MAP: 5 AND 10 MINUTE WALKSHED WITHIN A HALF MILE

Programmed:

- Gessner Briarpark Trail on Westpark utility corridor (off-street trail)

Short-term projects:

- Seagler Road from Westheimer to Richmond (dedicated on-street ROW)
- Westcenter Drive from Richmond to Westpark (dedicated on-street ROW)
- Meadowglen from BW8 to Gessner (dedicated on-street ROW)
- Tanglewilde Street from Briar Forest to Westpark Drive (shared on-street)

Long-term vision:

- Richmond Avenue (dedicated on-street ROW)
- Elmside Drive from Westheimer to Richmond (off-street trail)
- Woodchase Drive from Richmond to Gessner Briarpark Trail (off-street trail)
- Westpark Trail from Westpark Drive to Briarpark Drive (off-street trail)

MAP: BIKE/PED PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

Gessner Park and Ride
Source: Google Maps

- Library Loop Trail extension from Rogerdale through drainage ditch to Meadowglen (off-street trail)
- Westheimer Boulevard (dedicated in-street ROW)

EMPLOYEE COMMUTING PATTERNS

Enhancing transit commuter options and establishing more attractive housing choices for area employees are critical endeavors to the economic competitiveness of Westchase as an employment center. As a major employment hub, approximately 94,000 people work in Westchase District where around 36,000 work inside the study area (Westchase District, 2015). Nearly 99% of those employed in the study area commute from outside. A third of these commuters travel less than 10 miles and 38% travel 10 to 24 miles away (U.S. Census Bureau. LEHD Distance/Direction Analysis. 2015). An overwhelming majority of commuters are traveling from Fort Bend County and the Katy area, though there is no commuter bus service provided. A 2016 analysis by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute estimated that a commuter bus route sited in Fort Bend County with 10-15 minute frequencies during the peak hours could capture between 5% to 9% of commuters. Introducing this type of service could reduce roadway congestion during peak traffic periods.

GESSNER PARK AND RIDE

The Gessner Park and Ride is a 6-acre surface parking lot with a bus canopy in the southeastern corner of the Westchase District. The park and ride once served as a suburban parking facility for people commuting into Downtown Houston. However, the urban footprint has exponentially spread west beyond this area in the last couple

Gessner Park and Ride

of decades and the surrounding community no longer houses many of the workers it once did. Furthermore, commuter service has been gradually decreasing at the Gessner Park and Ride over the years as METRO readjusts its service based on demand and usage. The park and ride now only serves one express bus route (Westpark Express 151) and the 46 Gessner indirectly, at street level. Parking utilization does not surpass 15% on an average weekday and the site offers a transformative opportunity to repurpose a portion of this public land for a mixed-income Transit Oriented Development (TOD) community. This could have a twofold benefit for METRO in the form of 'value-capture.' First, the underperforming public site can be leveraged to attract private investment and catalyze redevelopment in the surrounding area. In turn, increments in property valuation can be used to finance additional transit capital improvements in the surrounding area and/or enhanced service for the Gessner 46, a prominent high frequency route in the network. The second value capture opportunity lies in the potential for METRO to generate a revenue stream from leasing portions of the property to private investment that can also be leveraged to fund more capital projects and/or service. Value

Parking at Briarpark and Westheimer
Source: Google Maps

Parking at Gessner and Westheimer
Source: Google Maps

capture could attract residents by expanding mixed income housing choices near transit, particularly for workers commuting to Downtown Houston on the Westpark Express 151 or utilizing the high-frequency Gessner 46 route.

PARKING SUPPLY

Abundant off-street parking is prevalent in the study area, to meet minimum parking requirements in Houston's land use ordinances. Minimum parking ordinances require a developer or property owner set aside portions of land exclusively for parking facilities which decreases the amount of productive land to recover the original investment and increases costs, altogether. These costs are traditionally bundled and passed down through higher prices on housing, leases, goods, taxes, and employment benefits, while everyone else pays for the parking space but the parker. This incentivizes people to drive more, which leads to higher congestion.

Analysis of aerial photography reveals that nearly 170 acres of the study area (approximately 15% of land) is dedicated to surface parking - not including structured parking. 26 parking structures were also identified, with a combined total of 116 floors and at different sizes.

Residential surface parking includes parallel on-street spaces in gated communities, but the vast majority are perpendicular spots on both sides of the lot, facing the apartments and townhomes, which are also in gated communities. Some perpendicular spots are covered, but most are uncovered.

Commercial surface parking lots make up the majority of the study area's surface parking: 120 of the total 170 acres of parking. More than half of commercial surface parking lots are over 30,000 square feet. Most of the largest surface lots are shared between stores in strip malls. More moderately sized commercial surface lots range from 20,000 to 40,000 square feet, and generally serve one property.

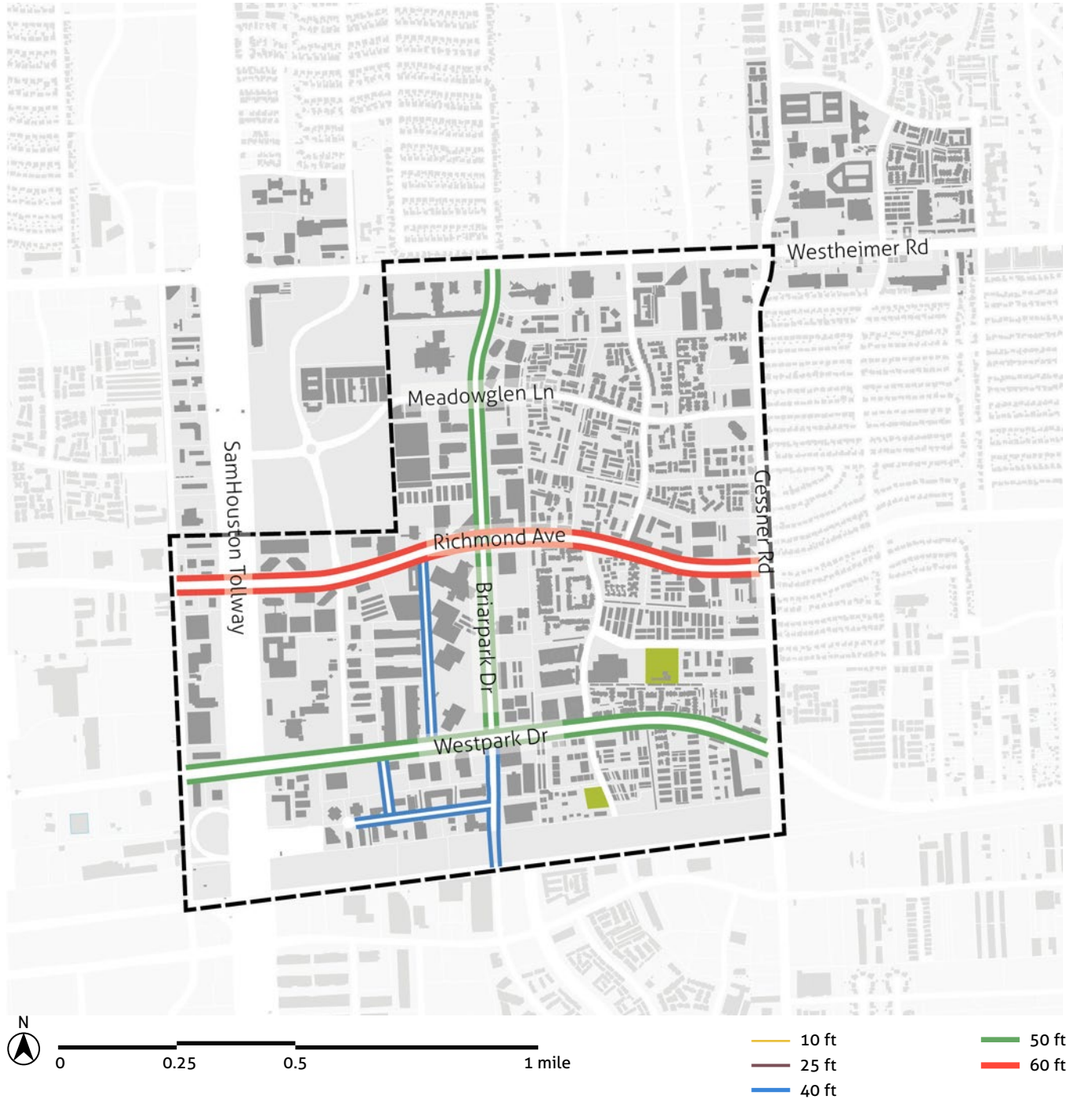
The times of day for peak parking demand vary for different commercial uses: office lots are used predominantly during the day on weekdays, while retail lots see more demand during the lunch hour, after work, and on weekends. This offers opportunities to share the existing parking supply between properties and free up land for development of its highest and best use, which, in turn, would enhance property tax revenues for local governments.

Urban Design

Recent efforts undertaken by the Westchase District in branding the study area and planning for new trails and parks have laid the groundwork for establishing a successful live-work environment, However, additional urban design efforts would assist in making the area more walkable and vibrant by providing a place where residents, commuters and visitors want to linger. Overall, the connection between the public realm and private sector lacks strength. The majority of residential communities are gated, and large setbacks and the presence of large surface parking lots weaken the connections between buildings and pedestrians, and hinder street activities at building frontages. Superblocks with large walking distances to destinations discourage people from walking from one place to another and the public realm needs additional well-programmed public spaces to attract locals and visitors. Bringing down the scale of blocks and setbacks to more appropriate sizes can help promote street activity and walkability. Weaving different experiences throughout the urban fabric by adding mixed-use development and streetscape improvements such as strategically placed lighting, trees, street furniture, and public art can also activate underutilized spaces and promote walkability.

Setbacks are an essential element of urban design, because they shape the relationship between buildings and streets. Setbacks in the study area tend to be large, and the experience of separation between sidewalks and buildings is often further enhanced by the presence of surface parking lots and unprogrammed green space that front the building stock. A healthy setback that better shapes built environment is between 10 -25 feet. Setback requirements in the study area are set by Westchase Community Association (WCA) covenants on some streets; on streets that are not regulated by these covenants, the City of Houston setback requirements apply. Overall, required setbacks vary from 60 feet to 10 feet.

MAP: COVENANT SETBACK REQUIREMENTS



Setbacks of residential properties on Richmond Avenue
Source: Google Maps

AREA SETBACK CHARACTERISTICS

Typical setbacks for mixed-use and walkable development types range from a zero-lot-line setback, with retail situated directly on the sidewalk, to 10 or 15 feet occupied largely by sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure. The setbacks in the study area tend to be much larger, partially due to Westchase Community Association covenant regulations. Richmond Avenue, which is surrounded by office and residential development, has the largest setback requirement in the area: 60 feet. However, most existing buildings in this area do not conform to these covenant requirements. The average setback between the street and residential properties along Richmond is closer to 40 feet. Office buildings tend to have larger setbacks: Millennium Tower, Schlumberger, and AIU Houston have the largest setbacks of up to 130 feet, while the buildings located next to the Sam Houston Tollway, including Towers at Westchase, are set back approximately 50 feet from the street.

Along Westpark Drive, the character of the area is a mix of office, residential, and light industrial development, and nearly all setbacks are 50 feet with a large green strip of passive space. KTI Networks, Vaughn Construction, and Trane Sales Office have larger setbacks with surface parking and a green strip. The strip commercial centers located at Westpark Drive and Gessner Road have ground-level retail that is divided from the street by surface parking lots.

Setbacks on Briarpark Drive are a standard 50 feet from Westpark Drive all the way north to Meadowglen Lane. Between Meadowglen Lane and Westheimer Road, the Marriott Westchase and Carillon are set back further due to surface parking.

On Westheimer Road, although the setback requirement is 25 feet, the de facto setback of most buildings is more than 60 feet. The setbacks here are comprised of a 40 feet wide tree-lined berm fronting surface parking lots. This encourages motorists to speed on Westheimer and creates a daunting experience for pedestrians who wish to access these buildings from Westheimer. To the west, the Carillon Shopping Center has a long frontage with some buildings located near the street, but the majority of retail space is set back behind a large surface parking lot. Similarly, half of the parcel area of Kroger is dedicated to surface parking, which creates a barrier to pedestrian access, even though the store is only a 5-10 minute walk from the surrounding residential developments.

Setbacks of commercial properties on Westheimer Road
Source: Google Maps

The existing setbacks on Gessner Road are different on the western and eastern sides of the street. On the western side, where most apartments and offices are located, the setback is generally 50 feet and occupied by a large passive green space. Properties from Pagewood Lane to Westpark Tollway have larger setbacks. On the eastern side, where the land use is largely single-family buildings with fences on the roadside, the average setback is only five feet.

On local streets in the study area, Elmside Drive, which is predominately residential, setbacks are 20 feet. Westchase Drive, which is surrounded by office uses, has a 50-foot setback. Setbacks on Rogerdale Road are different based on differing land uses.

Overall, setbacks in the study area are generally large, and most building frontages have weak connections with the public realm. To activate streets in the study area, the setback requirements (particularly those defined in the WCA covenants) need to be reduced to sizes that are less daunting for pedestrians, and functional public spaces need to be defined in the numerous passive green spaces to accommodate more pedestrian activity.

GROUND-LEVEL ACTIVATION

Seventy percent of buildings in the study area are exclusively office or residential, without a mix of ground-level uses that would activate the street through visual interest or regular pedestrian activity. Retail tends to be located on major corridors including Westheimer and Gessner Roads, and is primarily auto-oriented, with large setbacks and parking lots and many curb cuts that make the pedestrian experience less pleasant. The Westchase District is working on new designs for Westheimer that will enhance the pedestrian experience, but private-realm changes are also needed to complement these public realm interventions.

In general, strip commercial centers are prevalent throughout the study area, but these developments contribute little to the public realm. More mixed-use developments, small-scale retail and restaurants, and temporary activation opportunities such as food truck fairs or pop-up markets are needed throughout the study area.

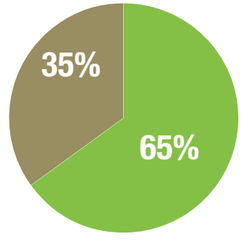
WALKABILITY

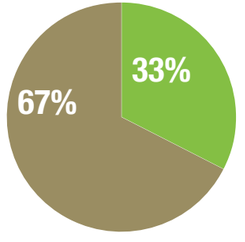
According to Dr. Mariela Alfonzo, president of Urban Imprint, an urban design-behavior research and consulting firm, "[w]alkability is no longer something that is merely nice to have or a luxury; it is a key to economic competitiveness." Most often, walkability is measured by a Walk Score on a scale of zero to 100. Walk Scores are based on an analysis of nearby walking routes to amenities, population density, and road metrics such as block length and intersection density. This metric is utilized by most real estate websites across North America.

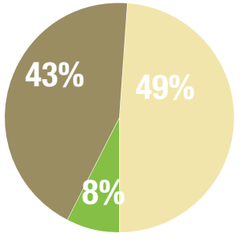
The Westchase District has a Walk Score of 54, which denotes the fact that it is somewhat walkable. A survey conducted among the Westchase District residents revealed about their walking behavior. Among 40 respondents, one-third were office employees and about half of them were individuals more than 50 years old. While asked about their favorite street to walk on in the District, 45% of the respondents replied they did not have one, because they did not walk and 23% mentioned Gessner Road as their favorite street to walk on. Richmond and Gessner, Richmond, Briarpark, Meadowglen, Tanglewilde and Library Loop Trail make up the remaining favorite streets among the respondents. However, during the Tactical Urbanism event at Retreat at Westchase, many residents expressed their willingness to walk and bike if appropriate built environment was in place. Exploring amenities and urban design improvements to induce walking would be an area of opportunity for a better walk score in the area. Some suggestions based on surveys of local residents included wider sidewalks, better lighting, safer crosswalks, shorter distance to destinations, more shade, and butterfly gardens.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE STREET TO DRIVE ON IN WESTCHASE?

WESTHEIMER	10 VOTES
MEADOWGLEN	6 VOTES
BRIAR FOREST	3 VOTES
RICHMOND	3 VOTES
WILCREST	3 VOTES
GESSNER	2 VOTES
ROGERDALE	2 VOTES
WALNUT BEND	2 VOTES
WESTPARK	2 VOTES







SURVEY RESPONDENTS SNAPSHOT

- Survey conducted online (promoted on The Wire) and at one informational event to date
- 40 total respondents to date
- Most are residents
- One-third are employees
- About half of respondents are age 50+; very few are under 30

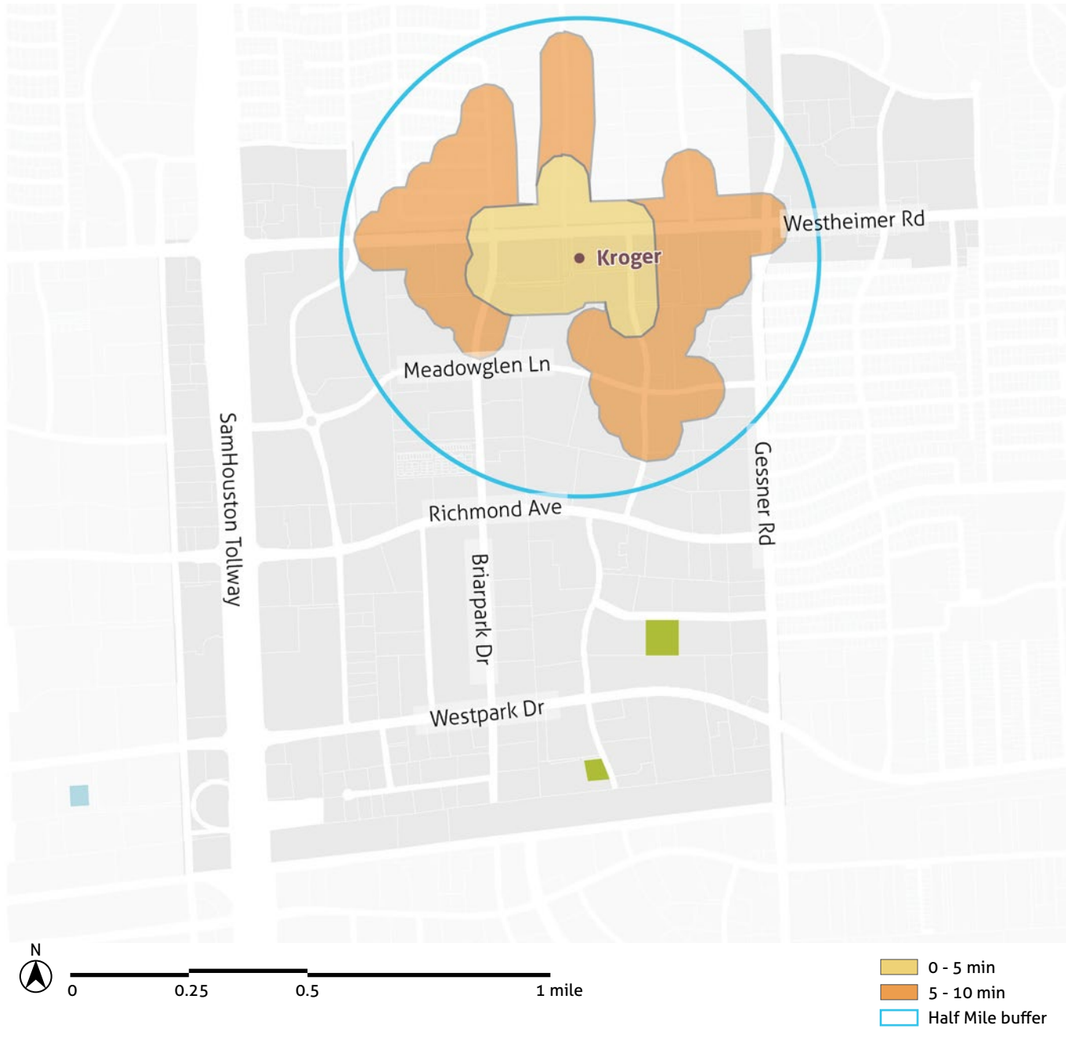
WALKABILITY

Walksheds are the walking distances that are reachable in a certain time frame from a starting point. On a flat field with no barriers, a walkshed would be a circle because a person could walk the same distance in any direction in the same about of time. Where barriers exist in urban areas, walksheds become smaller. Walkshed maps therefore show the connectivity and barriers to walking near a particular point. The graphics on this page and the following page illustrate five- and 10-minute walksheds from two locations that are common pedestrian destinations: a grocery store (Kroger) and a major transit stop (the intersection of Gessner Road and Richmond Drive).

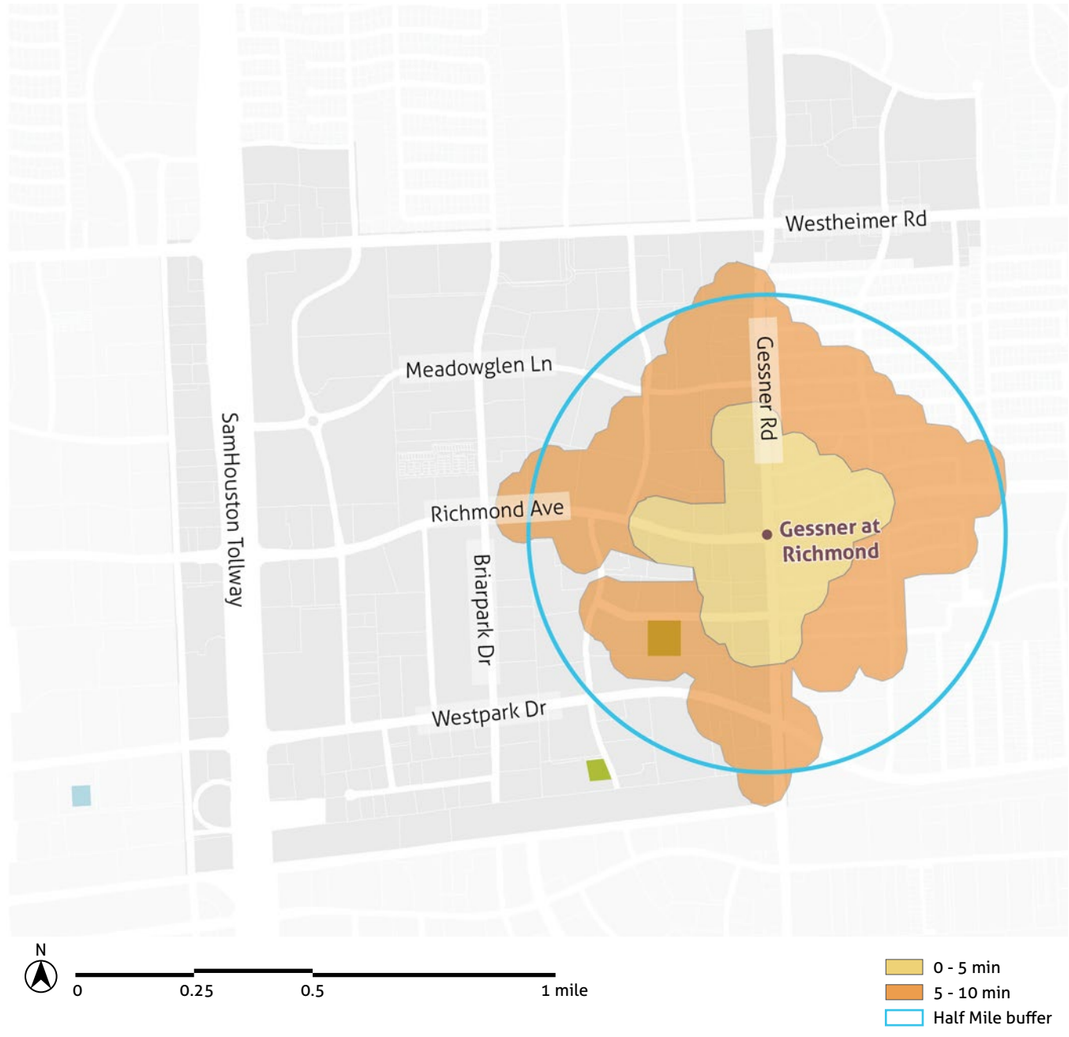
Starting from Kroger, within a five-minute walk, the accessibility is limited but better from the north and west; large superblocks on Meadowglen Lane limit access from the residential neighborhoods to the south. The five-minute walk to Gessner at Richmond is limited by the superblocks located between Elmside Drive and Meadowglen Lane.

The analysis of walksheds reveals a big issue in the area - superblocks created by an oversize street grid prevent people from choosing walking as their preferred travel mode in the study area. Compared to the average 270 feet x 270 feet block size in Midtown and Downtown Houston, the length of some blocks in the residential area surrounding the Elmside Drive and Meadowglen Drive intersection is over 1200 feet. Oversized blocks increase the time and walking distance to the destination for pedestrians and are favored by drivers since the traffic lights can be less for the same distance in small-block areas. Portland, Oregon, one of the most walkable cities in the United States, has blocks that are 200 feet x 200 feet. The Westchase District has examined opportunities to use infill streets to 'block-bust' in some of these parcels, or divide the superblocks into smaller sections by installing roads and/or pathways along property lines, in order to encourage walking.

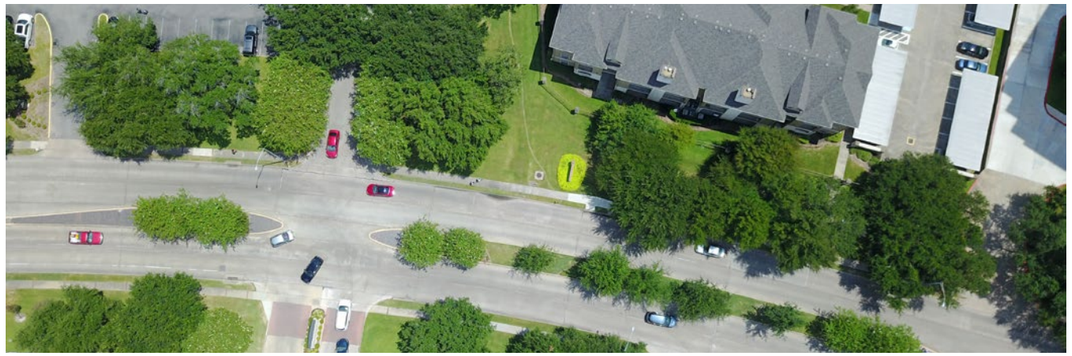
MAP: WALKSHED - KROGER



MAP: WALKSHED - GESSNER AT RICHMOND



Vegetations in office area on Richmond Avenue
Source: Google Maps



Tree covers in residential area on Richmond Avenue

The large setbacks in the study area do help to enhance the tree canopy and provide shade for pedestrians, but tree coverage is not consistent. Generally, trees are located in the large green swaths between buildings and sidewalks, and they are not always strategically planted to shade the sidewalk itself.

One area of universal agreement among stakeholders was the value of the Westchase District's well-maintained landscape interventions in the study area, and the maintenance requirements of the Westchase Community Association which ensure that private-realm landscapes are also maintained. Multiple residents and employers mentioned that Westchase is far more "green" than competitive business and residential districts in Houston. The landscapes also provide visual comfort while driving, biking, or walking through the study area.

"Blue Star" program focuses on prevention of a negative: crime. May influence perceptions of the amount of crime in neighborhood overall

One issue residents cited related to the popularity of gated communities is the perception that crime is a significant issue in the area. However, when digging deeper with stakeholders, it became clear that property crime, and specifically car break-ins, were the most prevalent concern - and that those break-ins often occurred in large commercial surface parking lots or other locations.

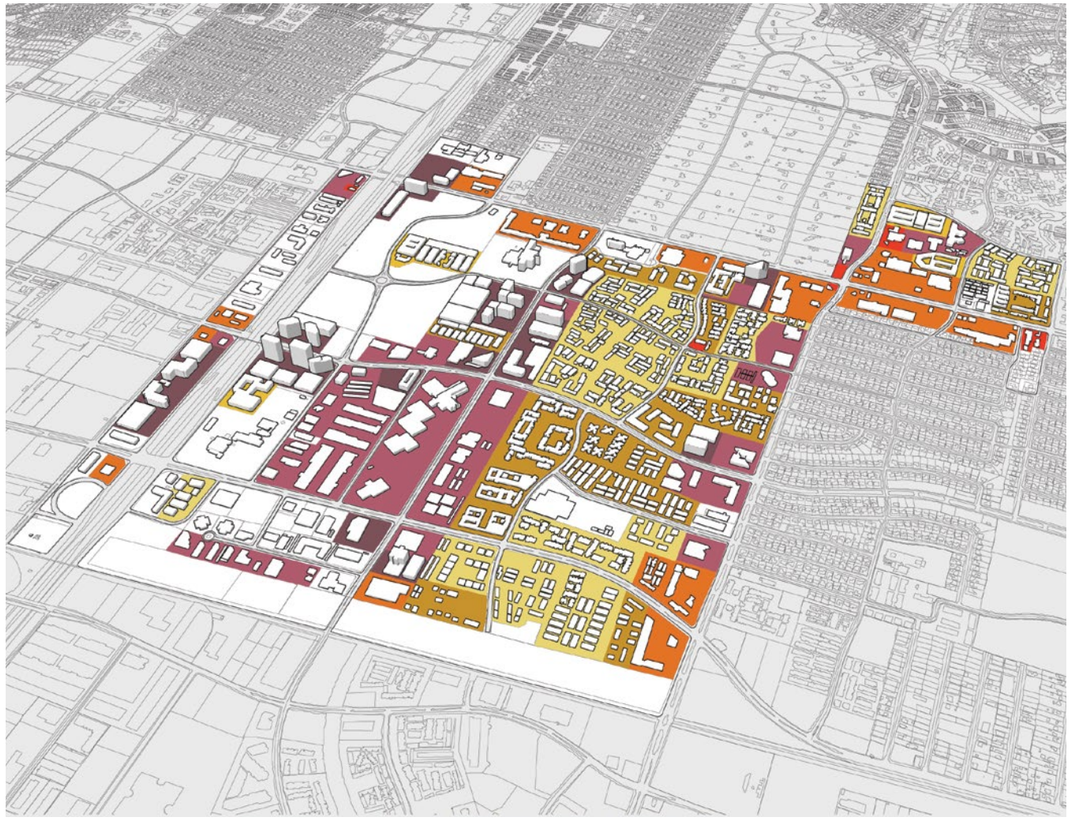
While there is often a perception of increased safety within gated communities, there are other solutions that may help reduce property crime and car break-ins without fences. Reducing the number of large surface parking lots, establishing shared parking areas that are utilized at all times of day, and examining opportunities to provide structured parking can reduce car break-ins. Additionally, while data from the National Crime Victimization Survey show that gated community residents are slightly less likely to experience residential burglaries than residents of non-gated communities, the difference is relatively minimal: one percent of gated-community households experience burglaries versus 1.3% of households living in a non-gated community. Providing adequate lighting and increasing the number of "eyes on the street" by activating public spaces may be a stronger approach for property crime deterrence.

The other concern of safety is lighting. Lighting in the study area is inconsistent in terms of siting and visual appeal. Most street lamps are widely spaced and do not provide adequate illumination at night. In residential areas, there is a lack of pedestrian-scaled lighting that promotes walking and increases safety.

BUILDING TYPOLOGY

The goal of analyzing building typologies is to better understand the interaction between the private sector and public realm in terms of different uses. The study area has varying levels of density and character within its boundaries, ranging from superblocks with 1970s and 1980s garden apartments, big box retail, office spaces with unbroken glass facades, and large vacant tracts. Overall, three residential typologies are identified, and two more for office and commercial.

MAP: BUILDING TYPOLOGY OVERVIEW



- Internally connected residential
- Externally connected residential
- Wrapped residential
- High-rise Office
- Low-rise Office
- Strip Mall
- Community Retail

Garden apartment residential complexes dominate the residential stock in the study area. These are often long rectangle blocks with multiple units, pitched roofs, and sometimes balconies on the roadside. Both the "internally connected" and "externally connected" garden apartment typologies are fenced on two sides of their peripheries. Both also have pull-in parking that is internal to the complex's fencing.

What differs between the two typologies is the way that entrances interact with the public roadway. In the "internally connected" typology, each apartment entrance faces toward an inner courtyard. Sidewalks connect entrances to the complex's parking lot.

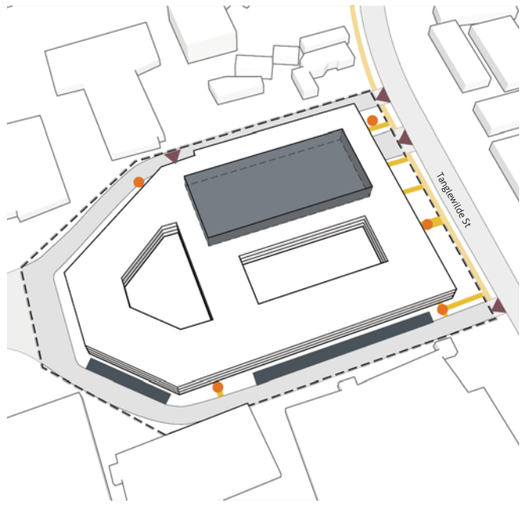
INTERNALLY CONNECTED RESIDENTIAL

Building primary entrance | Sidewalk | Parking | Fence | Vehicle entrance

EXTERNALLY CONNECTED RESIDENTIAL

In the "externally connected" garden apartments, entrances face directly onto the complex's parking lots, not toward an inner courtyard.

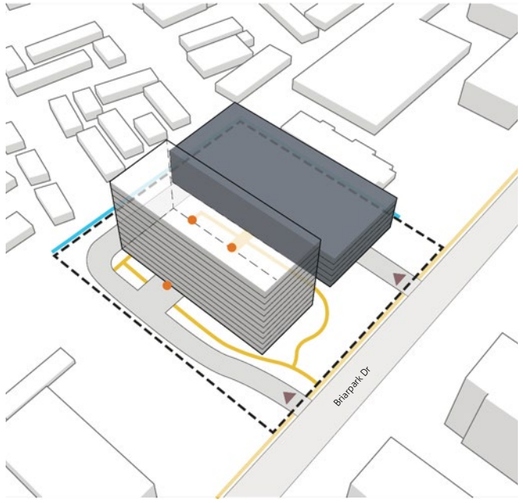
WRAPPED RESIDENTIAL



The "wrapped residential" typology is compact and has structured parking in the building. Only a handful of pull-in parking spots are positioned towards the public roadway. Entrances face directly to the roadway.

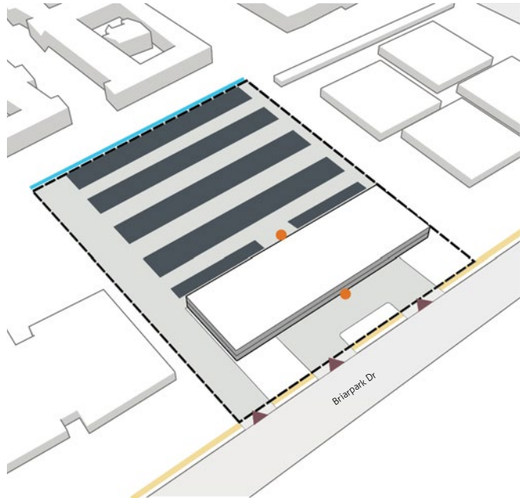
BUILDING TYPOLOGY

MAP: HIGH-RISE OFFICE



The "high-rise office" typology has high-rise buildings with structured parking where building entrances are perpendicular to streets. In the study area, the office buildings along Briarpark Drive, South Gessner Road, Sam Houston Tollway, and Westpark Drive are high-rise (15-20 stories) with large parking lots serve beyond the local community, but do not offer much in terms of interesting built environment elements or destinations. These building facades hardly interact at street level, but some office buildings have their own campus and green space that can be activated with programs for both employees and neighborhood residents.

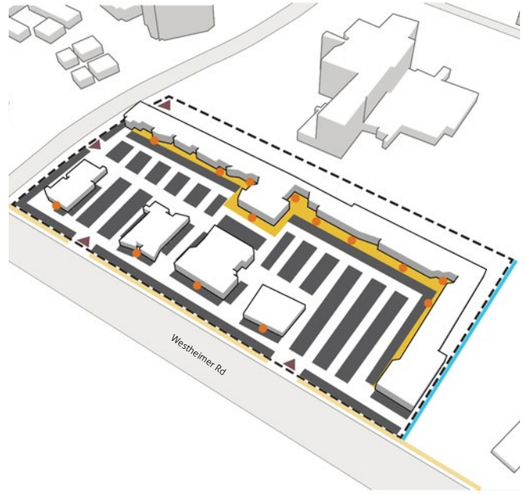
MAP: LOW-RISE OFFICE



In the "low-rise office" typology, low-rise buildings with surface parking and entrances are parallel to streets. These development patterns increase the need for amenities for the employees in the area, such as signature park space, streetscape improvements, food vendors, neighborhood scale commercial, and public transportation.

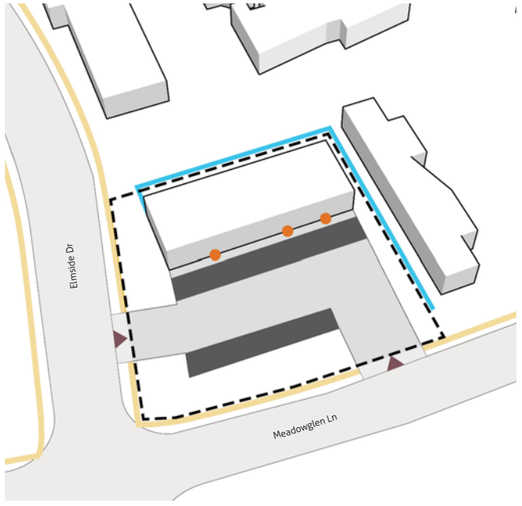
Building primary entrance Sidewalk Parking Fence Vehicle entrance

MAP: STRIP MALL



Strip mall and community retail are two of the main retail typologies in the study area. The strip malls along Westheimer Road and South Gessner Road take up most space for surface parking in the front and the entrances are connected to sidewalks through a long outdoor aisle. For example, the Carillon Shopping Mall resembles Spanish architecture with lined arcades in the front that provides a shaded walking space in front of the stores and several intimate plaza spaces.

MAP: COMMUNITY RETAIL



The smaller-scaled community retail in the residential areas along Elmside Dr, Meadowglen Lane, Richmond Avenue, and Woodchase Drive are largely low-rise (1-3 stories) with private driveways that are difficult to reach for transit users or pedestrians, and also has no direct connection with sidewalks.

Building primary entrance Sidewalk Parking Fence Vehicle entrance

Education

The study area offers a diverse array of educational institutions ranging from elementary schools to technical colleges. In the study area there is one charter school that focuses on science and technology, a public elementary school, and a College of Technology that offers associate's degrees. Houston Community College also has a campus near the study area. In addition, five private schools are in the study area: two of the private schools are early childhood education programs, two are private high schools, and one is early childhood education to 8th grade.

Past planning efforts in the Westchase District have highlighted the importance of improving education with the understanding that good education can lead to heightened economic development. Nevertheless, even with a wide range of educational opportunities in the study area, educational attainment has declined since 2000. The "Our Great Region 2040" plan noted the need to improve opportunities of lifelong learning. It suggested scaling up and coordinating educational efforts throughout the region, from quality early childhood education to GED and community education programs for seniors.

SNEED ELEMENTARY

Sneed Elementary is the only public elementary school in the study area.

CREATING A FAMILY FRIENDLY PLACE

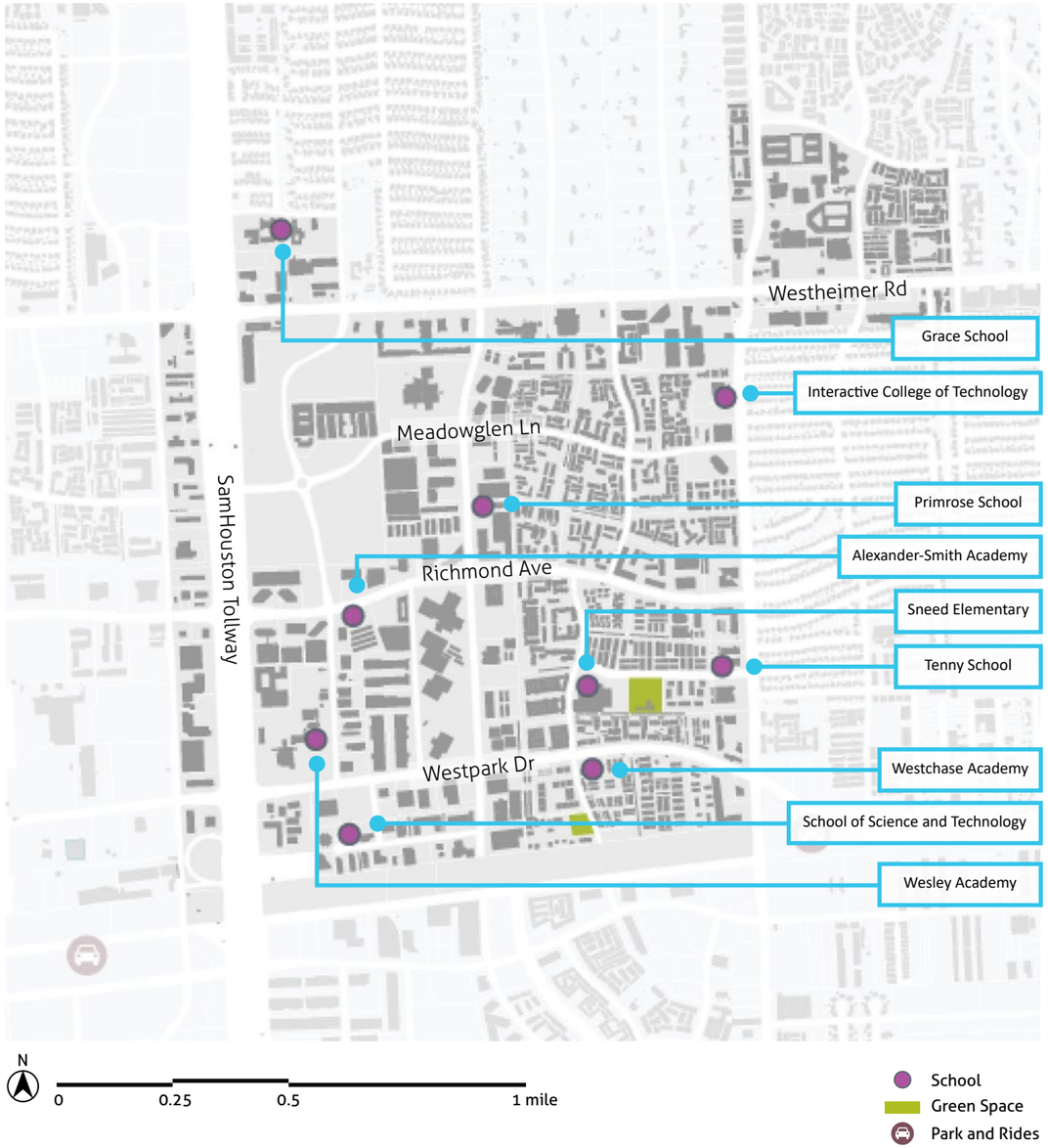
Westchase District has the potential to grow as a family-friendly place. From 2000 to 2015, there has been a steady increase in children 17 and under in the study area. There has also been an increase in population in the 22 to 34 age range; quality local education options are important to retain this population as they begin raising families. Private schools already have a robust presence in the neighborhood, but the area's traditional public school is in need of improvement due to low test scores and a high student to teacher ratio. Families and local government officials will need to advocate and dedicate resources to improve the local public school system.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The new Houston Community College campus near the study area, and the Technical College are important neighborhood amenities. The College can provide a pathway to improved educational attainment in the region. Local employers could connect with the Community College to design better pathways into employment. This knowledge sharing can encourage the community college to tailor courses and training offerings to employer needs.

The community college can act as a resource for the high schools and middle schools in the area. The school system can create educational partnerships that help younger students consider career alternatives.

An array of educational opportunities are present in the study area; most of these are private institutions, with one traditional public school and one charter school. Child care and preschool options include Primrose School and Wesley Academy, both private institutions. Elementary schools include Sneed Elementary, the area's traditional public school, which enrolls children in pre-kindergarten through fourth grade, as well as the School of Science and Technology, a K-8 charter school in its early years of operation in this area. Grace School, a private religious school for children of 20 months through 8th grade, is another elementary and middle school option.

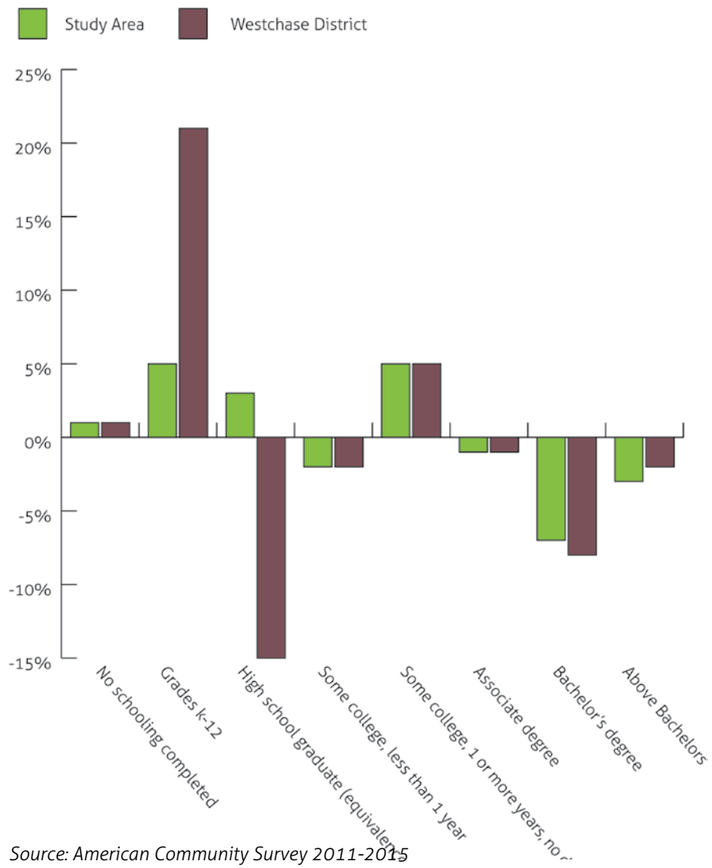


Middle schools include the Tenny School, a private insitution that offers middle and high-school grade levels and specializes in one-on-one teaching. The one high school in the study area is Alexander-Smith Academy, a private high school. Higher education options include the Interactive College of Technology, which offers Associate of Science degrees and diploma programs in technology and business, as well as the nearby Houston Community College Northwest campus.

SCHOOL QUALITY

The Texas statewide school ranking is specific to public schools. The only traditional public school in the study area is Sneed Elementary. Sneed's staff are dedicated to serving a high percentage of English-language learners and lower-income students; 84.1% of students at the school receive free or discounted lunch. The school's ranking, however, has been steadily declining, in recent years with a school score ranging from a D to a F. In 2017 Sneed ranked worse than 95.7% of schools in Texas (4,121st out of 4,308 elementary schools in the state). The student to teacher ratio, at 15.5, is the highest among the 25 elementary schools in the Alief Independent School District. Sneed Elementary may need more resources and staff to better serve existing and future children in the study area.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (PERCENT CHANGE)



Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The graph shows the percent change in educational attainment from 2000 to 2015. Statistically, educational attainment in the study area has decreased since 2000, with more residents having less than high school educations, high school, or "some college" and a smaller percentage having a bachelor's or graduate degree. The close proximity of the new Houston Community College may be a contributing factor to the change in the "some college" attainment percentage.

21%

Study area Increase in Residents with a K-12 Education

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Health and Sustainability

Past planning efforts in the Westchase District have highlighted the importance of improving health and environmental sustainability and many efforts are already underway that promote sustainability. "Our Great Region 2040" noted the need to improve the environment through securing a clean and ample water supply, cultivating places where people can lead active and healthy lives and the need to increase the neighborhoods resiliency to disaster and the changing environment. The City of Houston's Parks Master Plan and Westchase Trails and Parks Master Plan highlight areas that are park-deficient and consider next steps for active design. These environmental improvements are vital for enhancing the health of Westchase's residents. Extensive research shows linkages between human health and the amount of exposure to diverse natural habitats.

As the Westchase District and the study area continue to welcome new residents and visitors, the district should highlight the areas dedicated to environmental sustainability and mark these efforts as core components of the Westchase brand. While residents, employees, and visitors can enjoy amenities such as the Library Loop and exercise stations on the Brays Bayou Connector, Westchase will need to prioritize further sustainable development to ensure lasting improvements.

ENCOURAGING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTIVE DESIGN

Activating the sidewalk for physical activity

NEED FOR ACTIVE DESIGN

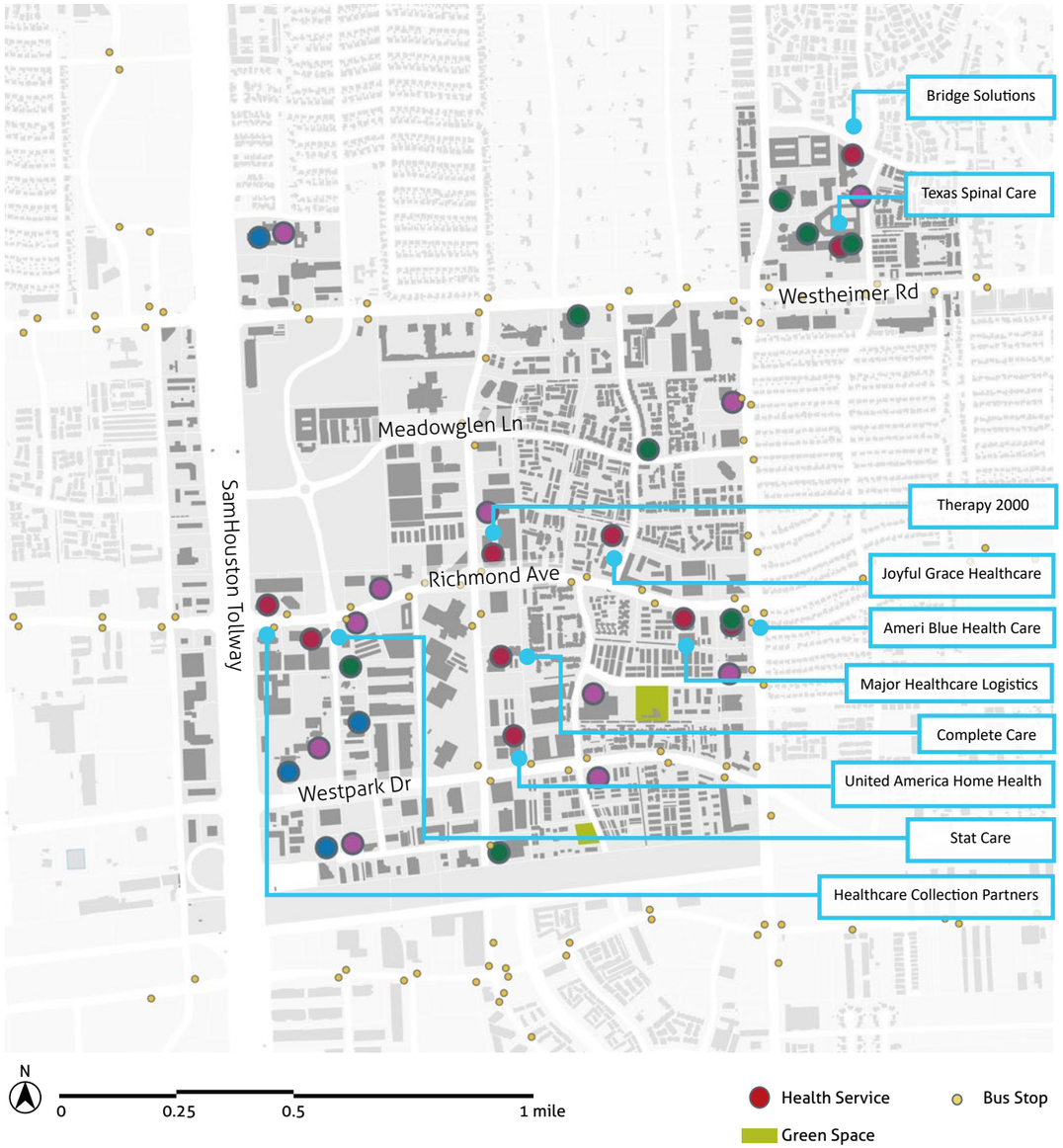
Current conditions of the urban fabric and infrastructure can create opportunities for active design. A walkshed analysis of a 5-minute and 10-minute walk radii was conducted in the study area. The results from the analysis revealed the impact large block sizes have on discouraging walkability and being active. A 10-minute walk from the supermarket will take a pedestrian fairly far on Westheimer or Elmside, but does not allow quick access to a large area between Meadowglen and Richmond.

While the existing trail system is a strong start, integrating walkability into the urban fabric with additional walkable loops and trails will encourage residents and employees to walk rather than drive when traveling shorter distances. Increased rates of walking can reduce the risk of heart disease and asthma and help people maintain a healthy weight.

HEALTH SERVICES

The study area offers a diverse range of health services, from therapy, to spinal care, to in-home care services for residents who need special assistance. While there are fewer care centers for urgent needs directly in the study area, the West Houston Medical Center and Nexus Children's Hospital are located nearby. An urgent care center is projected to open soon in the immediate vicinity.

The Health Impact Snapshot in the Implementation section of this report describes the potential impacts of the recommendations in this report on local health conditions.



STREET TREES

Existing condition of tree canopy cover in study area

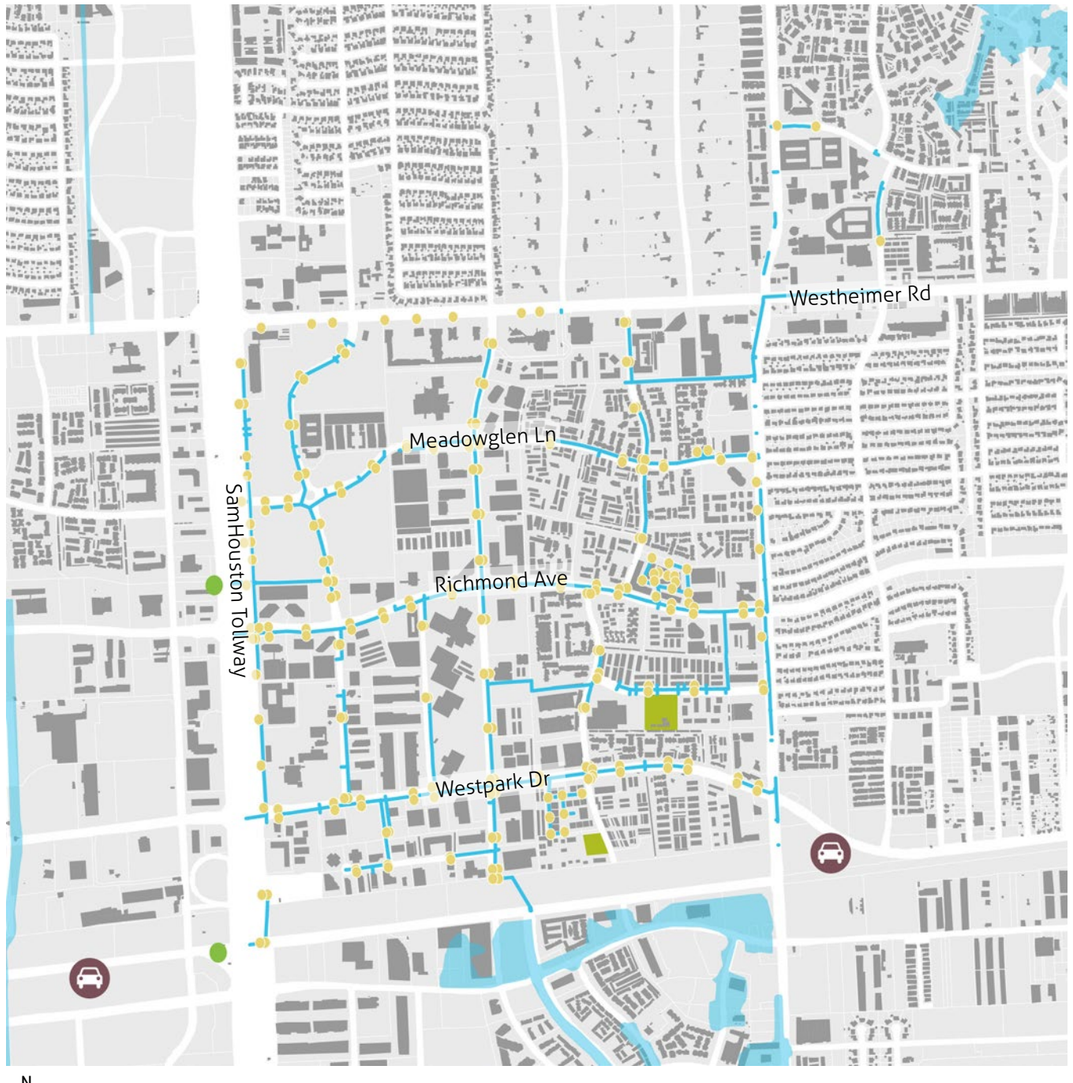
The Westchase District trail system is an impressive feature of the study area and District. Residents and visitors of the neighborhood enjoy the Library Loop trail and outdoor exercise equipment along the Harris County Flood Control ditch and can continue on the trail toward Rogerdale Rd. If users prefer an off-street option, they can jog on to the Brays Bayou Connector Trail and enjoy more exercise equipment south of Harwin. In addition to an impressive trail network, the Westchase District is home to a butterfly garden. The Westchase District highlights their sustainable development as a key feature of the area and with existing momentum there is an opportunity to take green infrastructure to the next level. The definition of green infrastructure varies across regions but generally is considered a network of open space, watersheds, woodlands, park or other natural areas that provide service to enrich and sustain life.

In the study area there is a need for more tree canopy, more park space, and more opportunity to naturally address potentially harmful weather such as flooding. Implementing green infrastructure can not only address health outcomes related to air quality, urban heat island effect, and water quality, it can also provide habitat for local species.

The presence of tree canopy on pedestrian routes is a major determining factor for walkability. Trees filter air and can reduce flooding issues during heavy rainfall. Increasing tree canopy cover could entice residents to walk and could aid in reducing the high percentage of heart disease. Trees also provide shade and create opportunities to reduce the urban heat island effect in the neighborhood. The tree canopy coverage analysis shows areas north east of the study area with a high percentage of tree cover ranging from 76-100% however within the study area tree canopy is as low as 0-25%.

The Westchase District has recognized that increasing walkability to parks and open spaces is an important goal, both by adding parks and trails and improving neighborhood-level walkability The Houston Park Master Plan makes clear that the study area is park deficient and park space is not accessible to all residents of the neighborhood. The park accessibility map below highlights theoretical 0.25 and 0.5-mile walking radii from existing green spaces near the study area. Westchase District is currently working to add Woodchase Park in the southwest study area. The Westheimer corridor could also benefit from increased park access.

The study area has a robust network of drainage, and a low percent of floodplains. While anecdotally street flooding during heavy rain is seen as an issue, it is important to note that Westchase did not flood during Hurricane Harvey. This lack of flooding should be highlighted as an asset of the neighborhood. Even with a robust drainage network, the neighborhood should continue to implement low-impact landscape design as seen in One Oak Park.



CONCEPT PLAN

The five concepts and individual recommendations in this Livable Centers Study work to answer the study's central questions by:

- Combining major projects (that were vetted for feasibility and impact) with smaller, incremental program or policy changes.
- Focusing on how public-sector action can motivate the private sector to act, and identifying areas for potential public-private partnerships.
- Incorporating and building on ideas from previous planning work about walkability, bikeability, and transit to encourage alternative modes of travel.
- Encouraging new housing options in areas that currently lack housing development, while avoiding any recommendations that would displace existing residents.

The five concepts are:

- **Concept 1:** Build the Future Westchase District
- **Concept 2:** Create a Walkable Public Realm for People
- **Concept 3:** Provide Transportation Options for Commuters, Visitors, and Residents
- **Concept 4:** Develop High-Quality Housing for All Residents
- **Concept 5:** Advance Community Health and Sustainability

CONCEPT 1

Build the Future Westchase District

The Westchase District and study area have strong core economic and social assets. The District houses over 70,000 jobs, approximately 38% of which are located in the study area, in diverse fields including numerous types of professional services; retail; logistics and transportation; and social services. The study area's large concentration of well-maintained garden apartments provide housing opportunities for a diverse group of residents, including families and young professionals. Residents of the area note that they are attracted to the area's convenient location, green streets and trails, and reasonable prices.

Concept 1 focuses on opportunities for the District and stakeholders to build on its assets with new types of development that diversify the area's business and residential offerings and foster a mixed-use, walkable environment.

Recommendations in this section include:

Recommendation 1.1: Westheimer Area: Class A, Mixed-Use Development

- 1.1A. Create A New Front Yard for Mixed-Use Development: The Promenade
- 1.1B. Develop a Signature Park on the Promenade
- 1.1C. Advocate for Premier Bus Rapid Transit on Westheimer

Recommendation 1.2: Gessner at Westpark: An Active, Transit-Oriented Hub

- 1.2A. Encourage Transit-Oriented Development at the Gessner Park-and-Ride
- 1.2B. Implement Public Realm and Universal Design Improvements

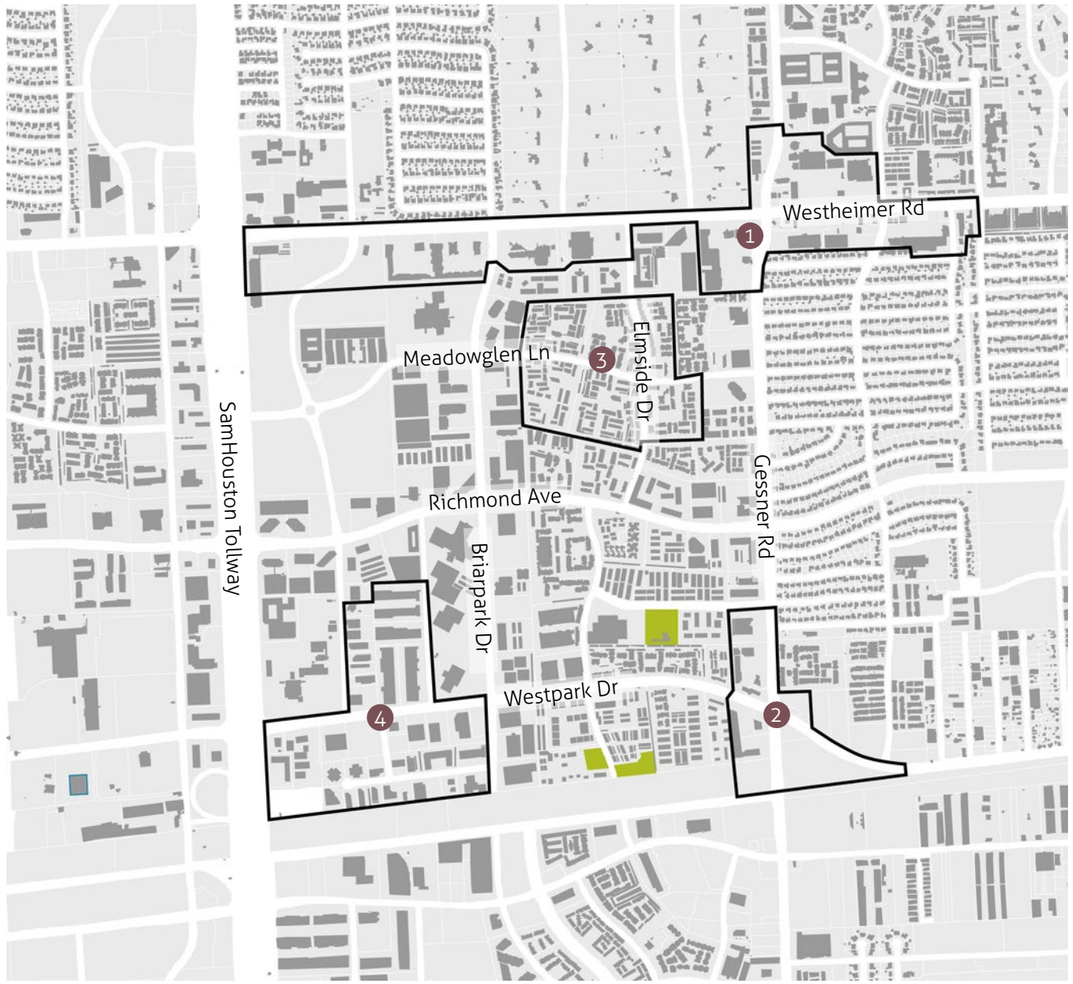
Recommendation 1.3: Elmside at Meadowglen: Repurpose Aging Retail

- 1.3A. Build the Case for a Mixed-Use Redevelopment
- 1.3B. Improve Walkable Connections to Adjacent Residential Properties

Recommendation 1.4: Southwest Study Area: Connectivity to Stimulate Change

- 1.4A. Make Critical Infill Street Connections
- 1.4B. Target Development of Patio Homes and Similar Residential Typologies

Based on the existing conditions analysis and market study, this section identifies four particular "redevelopment areas" for consideration: the Westheimer corridor; the retail and METRO park-and-ride sites at Gessner Road and Westpark Drive; the neighborhood retail site at Meadowglen Lane and Elmside Drive; and the southwest portion of the study area that is predominantly light industrial and warehousing uses. These areas all present unique opportunities to establish a more mixed-use and walkable environment and increase the visual appeal of the study area, without promoting displacement of existing residents.



1.1: WESTHEIMER AREA: CLASS A, MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

Westheimer is the highest-traffic corridor in the study area, and connects the Westchase District with many other job centers and neighborhoods in Houston. Engagement with developers and property owners suggests that the Westheimer corridor has the strongest potential for establishing Class A, mixed-use development in the District. Previous studies conducted for the District[3] have suggested that adding Class A residential within the district will be essential to attract more of the professionals who work in the district to live there as well, which would help reduce traffic from commuting and improve community cohesion.

Market data suggests that the study area's ability to support Class A rents is at a key juncture. Prior to Hurricane Harvey, two new Class A residential developments within a few blocks of the Westheimer redevelopment area were experiencing somewhat slow lease-up processes and were providing a number of concessions in order to attract tenants. When the study area and its near surroundings remained dry during Harvey, these buildings almost immediately realized near-100% occupancy. The opportunity exists now to build on this momentum by establishing amenities that will benefit all Westchase District residents and transform the Westheimer corridor into a walkable live-work-play environment.

[3] Steve Spillette study 2013

WESTHEIMER CORRIDOR LOOKING TOWARD DOWNTOWN

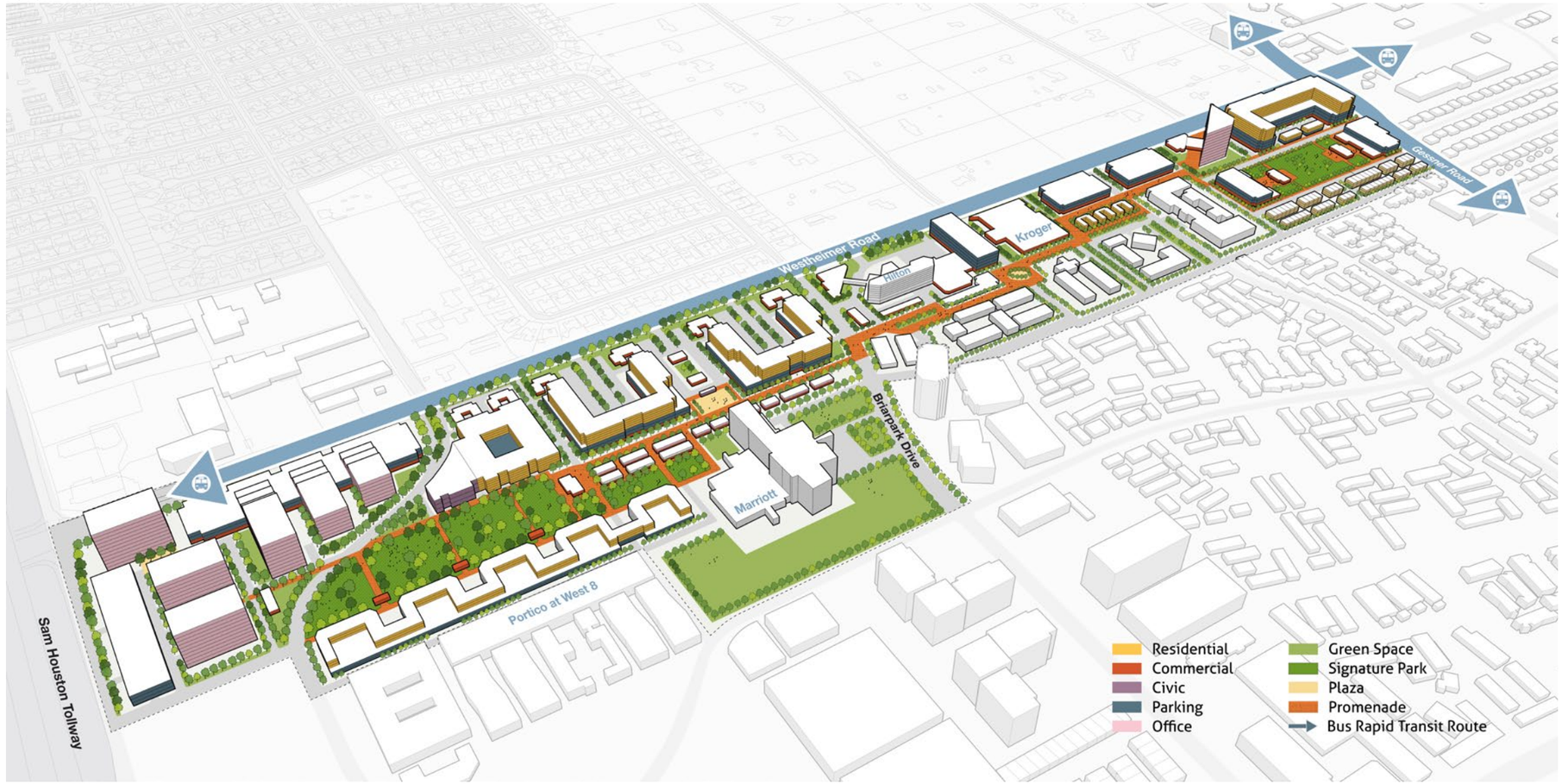
Asakura Robinson

1.1A. CREATE A NEW FRONT YARD FOR MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT: THE PROMENADE

Public investments in high-quality infrastructure have the potential to transform neighborhoods and catalyze mixed use development, particularly when coordinated with prospective developers and aligned with a community's vision. The Promenade builds on the community's vision established in the Westchase District Mobility Plan to introduce infill streets that reduce block lengths and create a more walkable street grid, with a premier walkable corridor that sets a new frontage for commercial and residential development. It introduces a connected linear public space that anchors a 'park once and walk' center for Westchase District offering existing land owners and tenants opportunities to maximize shared-parking; encourages development of lifestyle centers and allows for greater diversity in the design of such properties; and enhances walkable connections to the surrounding residential neighborhoods. As recorded over the years, Houstonians' interest for living in walkable areas with a mix of uses is on the rise, at 56% in 2017 up from 48% in 2009.[4] Pursuing this transformative project will enhance the neighborhood's economic competitiveness for decades to come. It becomes a place where office workers can comfortably and conveniently walk to lunch destinations, residents can walk home, neighbors can stop by for shopping and leisure, and visitors can shop while staying at a nearby hotel.

[4] The Kinder Houston Area Survey, 2017. https://kinder.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Kinder_Institute_for_Urban_Research/HAS/2017%20Kinder%20Houston%20Area%20Survey%20FINAL.pdf

FUTURE PROMENADE WITH MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT



EXISTING CONDITION

Westheimer Road

Gessner Road

Briarpark Drive

Sam Houston Tollway

Green Space
Signature Park
Plaza
Promenade

N

0

0.25 mile

1.1: WESTHEIMER AREA: CLASS A, MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

PROMENADE SEGMENTS

The project team has worked to create a set of conceptual diagrams that illustrate the future development potential of the area, as well as opportunities to adapt circulation patterns and parking to accommodate this major intervention. While these diagrams are speculative and will need to adapt to accommodate actual future development proposals, they are in keeping with the vision for the Westheimer area expressed by the public and the Steering Committee for this Livable Centers study.

The Promenade will connect a number of varying land uses and urban character types as it extends across the study area, both under current conditions and as envisioned in the future. The study team has identified four potential "segments" of the Promenade, each with their own distinct character and surrounding development typology. The below details show how new systems of circulation, connectivity, and parking can join together with new development and land uses around the Promenade to create a successful and vibrant Westheimer corridor.

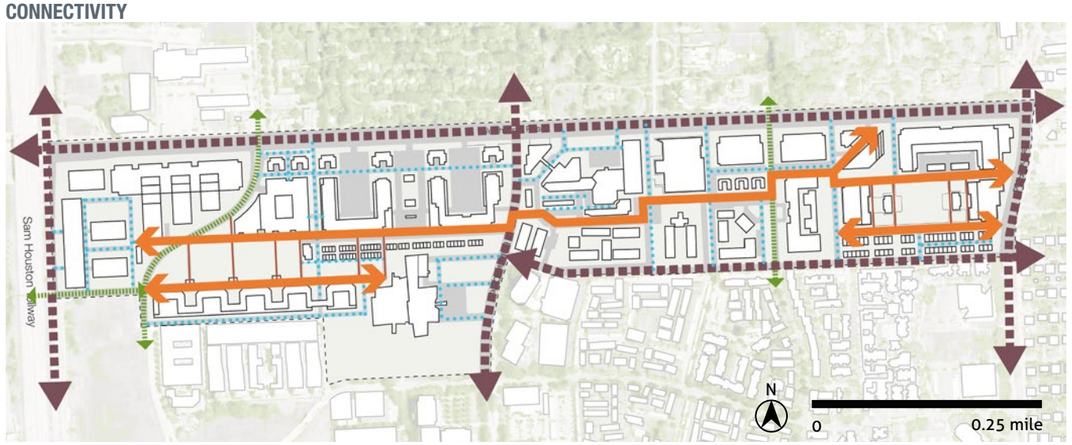
- Segment 1-Signature Park and Office
- Segment 2- Destination Mixed Use
- Segment 3- Neighborhood Mixed Use
- Segment 4- Transit Oriented Development

- Arterial Road
- Collector Road
- Local Road
- Walkway
- Promenade

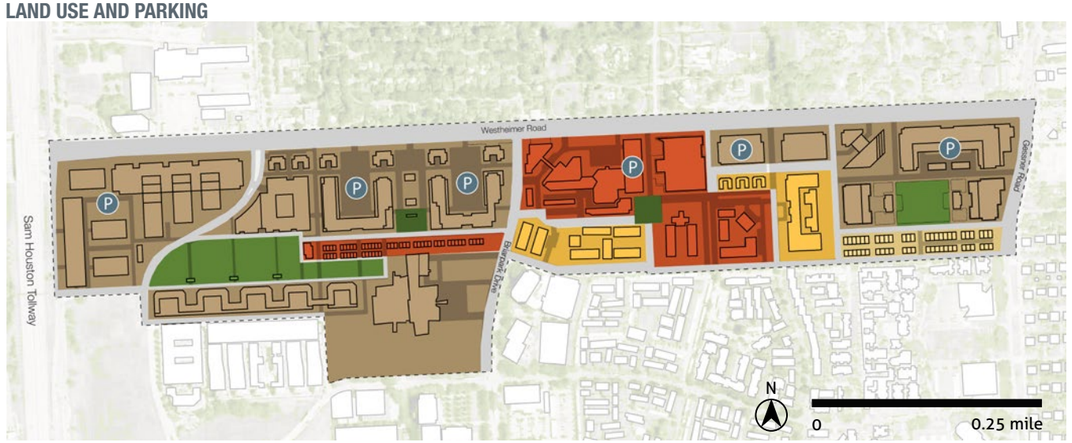
- Single Family Residence
- Multifamily Residence
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Open Space and Park
- Parking

CHARACTER

CONNECTIVITY



LAND USE AND PARKING



1.1: WESTHEIMER AREA: CLASS A, MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

SEGMENT 1 - SIGNATURE PARK AND OFFICE

The first segment, from left to right, begins just west of Seagler Rd. and connects to the Carillon Shopping Center on the east. The objective in this area is to anchor a signature park with The Promenade, to make the best use of both investments with connectivity to the west of the study area that would provide immediate access to a park and The Promenade. Following the recommendation of 1.1B, this area is suitable for office and ground-floor retail surrounding the park. Market study findings suggest a small though strategic approach to programming that establishes demand and consequently lead to that demand sorting itself along The Promenade in the form of lifestyle centers or small-scale retail redevelopment on existing surface parking lots.

SEGMENT 2 - DESTINATION MIXED USE

Flanked by just two property owners, this Promenade segment offers a unique opportunity to coordinate redevelopment starting on the western boundary of The Carillon shopping center through the existing service alley to Briarpark Drive. Envisioned in this segment is a destination lifestyle center on the northern side of the promenade, with up to two large developments within the existing Carillon shopping center. The southern side is ideal for small scale commercial fronting the Promenade. A fully pedestrianized residential alley from Westheimer to Meadowglen on the western boundary would extend access to existing and future residential development nearby.

SEGMENT 3 - NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED USE

The third segment lies between Briarpark Drive and Elmside Drive. Currently, this segment is a privately-owned street with two 20 ft. travel lanes and little traffic, making it an ideal segment for early Promenade development. In this area, the Promenade would make a direct connection to the District's Elmside-Woodchase side path (a shared-use path) currently in development, which would connect the Promenade with apartment complexes on Elmside and two new amenities in the southern end of the study area, the Westpark Trail and Woodchase Park. The Promenade would also enhance access to the Kroger grocery store for existing apartment communities, hotels, and offices situated on the corridor where there are no sidewalks and people must get in their car or walk on the road to access their neighborhood grocery store. There are some uses (the Courtyard by Marriott hotel and the Kroger pharmacy drive-through) that currently depend on this street that would need to be accommodated through the Promenade's design.

SEGMENT 4 - TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

On the eastern edge of the Promenade lies the Transit Oriented Development segment between Elmside and Gessner Rd. The Promenade is envisioned to begin between the Cantoni Furniture store and the Residences 2727 apartment complex, then move behind the Chase bank tower and embank into a newly redeveloped mixed use TOD site at the intersection of Gessner. This portion of the Promenade is a long term phase as the corridor itself does not have a straightforward path through to Gessner Rd. and would likely require land acquisition or easements. It is situated at one of the most utilized transfer points in METRO's bus network and is slated to play a prominent role as the Westheimer Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project -- currently in the planning stages by METRO -- has identified Gessner as one of the featured BRT stations. Moreover, the Gessner 46 route has recently been deemed an emerging corridor ripe for high capacity transit in METRO's new long range plan, METRONext, that would likely increase activity and demand for housing. The proposed layout recommends a pedestrian bridge from the BRT boarding platform to cross Westheimer directly into a mixed use shopping center comprised of small commercial on the initial two floors and residential above. The Promenade sits between this structure and a small footprint greenspace for the TOD site. A residential transition zone resides just south of the greenspace with patio homes and north and south connections into existing adjacent multifamily properties.

SEGMENT	DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGY	CIRCULATION [5]	CONNECTIVITY	PARKING	LAND USES & PROGRAMMING
1	Office mixed use	Commercial shared-street west of Seagler Rd.; becomes a central part of the signature park between Seagler Rd. and Carillon service alley; [5]	Raised crosswalk at Seagler Rd.; north and south connection to Portico at West 8; connects to Carillon service alley	Public-private partnership opportunity for office user parking facilities under park or at office developments; shared-parking to enhance 'park once and walk' for park patrons	Office; ground-floor retail; anchor tenant from hospitality, fitness, or entertainment; secondary tenants in the form of restaurants; and small retail
2	Destination mixed use	Commercial alley from signature park to Briarpark fully pedestrianized with bollards; residential alley at western boundary of this segment up north to Westheimer and south to Meadowglen; north and south pedestrian alleys into mixed use centers at Carillon site [6]	Raised crosswalk at Briarpark; north and south connection Westheimer, Meadowglen and existing properties along Promenade	Private parking facilities at Carillon if redeveloped; shared-parking opportunities between these facilities and Marriott to enhance 'park once and walk' for promenade, park, and lifestyle center patrons	Lifestyle centers; small scale commercial; plaza at center of segment
3	Neighborhood mixed use	Commercial alley on western half, pedestrianized with bollards; public plaza at the center; commercial shared street in eastern half; service delivery access on west of Kroger [7]	Raised crosswalks at Briarpark and Elmside; North and south alley extensions into apartments	Public-private partnership opportunity with grocery store to develop structured parking with mixed uses; shared parking to reduce surface parking dependence for adjacent properties	Multifamily residential; hotels; small commercial, services and amenities; use excess green space for pocket parks; potential for a dog park
4	Transit Oriented Development mixed use	The Promenade is Commercial shared street; the site is bound by Residential shared-streets; with a Commercial shared-street between The Promenade and the southernmost Residential shared street. [8]	Pedestrian bridge from TOD shopping center to boarding platform; north and south entrances to existing multifamily and proposed patio homes;	Public-private parking opportunity at TOD shopping center and under park; shared use parking for users of westernmost properties	Vertical residential; commercial shopping center; two office towers flanking greenspace with groundfloor retail; small lot residential town homes or patio homes;

[5, 6, 7, 8] Urban Street Design Guide, 2013. NACTO.

1.1B. DEVELOP A SIGNATURE PARK ON THE PROMENADE

Signature parks are well-programmed green spaces with strong design, multiple types of activities, and areas for residents of all ages to enjoy. In Houston, Discovery Green and Levy Park are good examples of urban signature parks that contribute significantly to their context and have been associated with intensified development in the adjacent areas. These parks may include such uses as:

- Concessions and retail
- High-quality custom play spaces
- Public art, including interactive public art
- Performance venues
- Paths, trails, and boardwalks
- Strong planting design that emphasizes habitat and native plants, conservation, or interaction with nature in novel ways – for example, labyrinths, or sensory gardens.

The design for the Promenade incorporates two potential locations for signature parks in Segment 1 (Signature Park and Office) and Segment 4 (Transit-Oriented Development). The signature park in Segment 1 anchors the western end of the Promenade and centers new potential mixed-use development at the Carillon site, as well as additional residential and office development on the West 8 site. The signature park in Segment 4 forms a focal point for transit-oriented mixed-use development near the intersection of Westheimer Road and Gessner Road, as well as new proposed townhomes and office development in the area. It includes an underground parking garage designed to safely detain water during major storms.

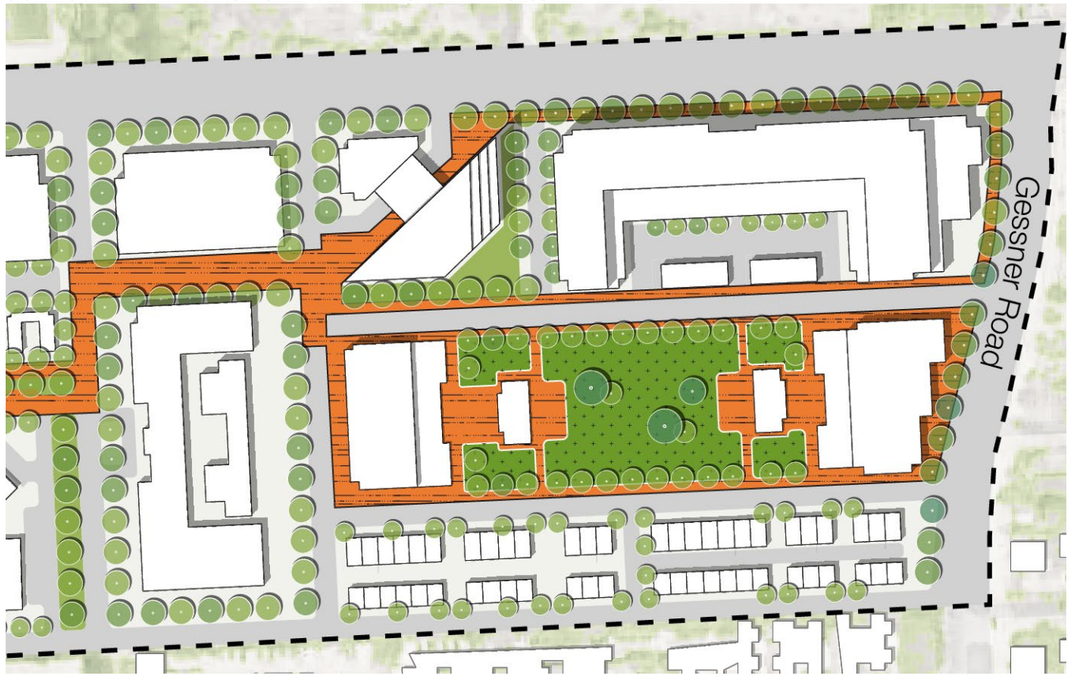
LEVY PARK

Levy Park Conservancy.

In the course of interviewing developers and property owners in Westchase, many mentioned Levy Park as an example of a successful public-private effort to create a signature park that attracts neighbors and visitors alike. Levy Park was a pre-existing City of Houston-owned park in the Uptown neighborhood that was upgraded into a signature green space asset through a public-private partnership. The Upper Kirby Redevelopment Authority raised $15 million to renovate the six-acre park. UKRA also acquired land near Levy Park and made a ground lease arrangement with Midway, the ultimate developer of the property, that brings hundreds of thousands in fees each year devoted to maintaining the park. Sponsorships and event fees also contribute to the approximately $900,000 annual budget for park operations.

The Levy Park story is a story of persistence and incremental progress: the project took over 15 years from start to finish, with the UKRA funding incremental improvements before securing the funds to fully re-design the park. The Upper Kirby Livable Centers Study, conducted in 2010, helped to provide the impetus and tools to accomplish the full redesign. Ultimately, Levy Park became a strong example of a "catalyst" project that was able to attract quality, mixed-use development to an opportunity-rich but underutilized area.

SIGNATURE PARK #1: TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT AT GESSNER AND WESTHEIMER



SIGNATURE PARK #2: MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT NEAR SEAGLER

1.1C. ADVOCATE FOR PREMIER BUS RAPID TRANSIT ON WESTHEIMER

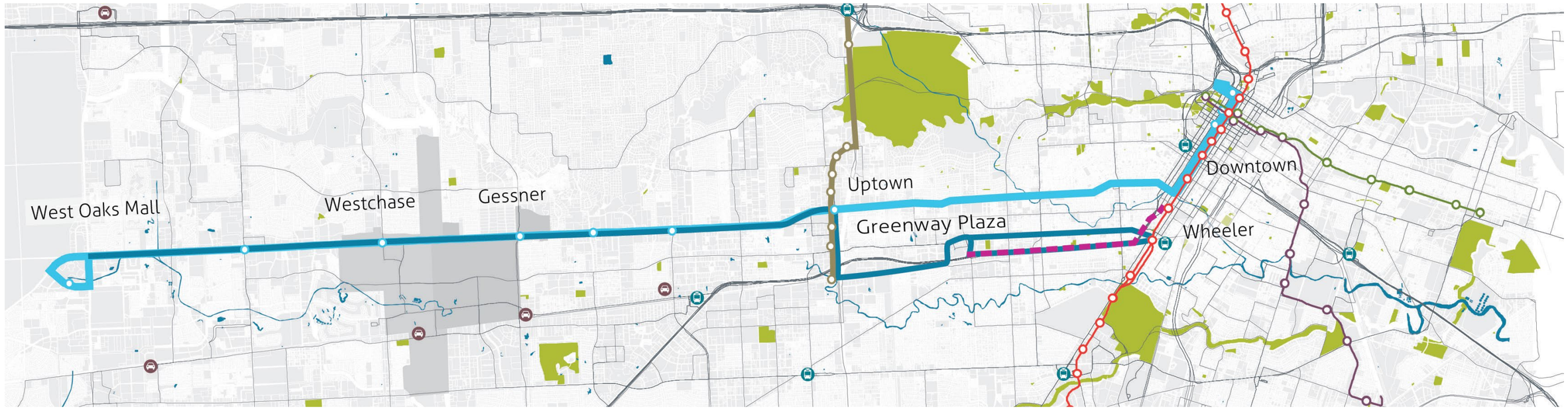
The area's economic competitiveness stands to benefit from METRO's planned bus rapid transit (BRT) project on the Westheimer corridor. Currently, the Westheimer route is the most utilized bus route in Texas averaging 13,000 weekday boardings on a 20-mile corridor with over 100 bus stops in each direction. A bus ride in each direction can take up to 120 minutes to complete. Dedicated transit lanes -- center-running and separated from automobiles -- ensures buses can operate unimpeded through congestion and are physically set up to offer the most travel time savings. There are additional features that can maximize travel time savings and should be considered, such as: Traffic signal priority; off-board fare collection; platform level boarding; and passing lanes at stations, among others.

However, investment in BRT offers much more than simply travel time savings and better service reliability. It is an infrastructure investment that will inherently alter demand for transit usage and housing near stations that could be leveraged to catalyze transit-supportive built form and Transit Oriented Development (TOD). Commuter choices may increase between employment centers and offer more diverse housing options and price points to Houstonians. In addition, a western terminus at West Oaks mall could enable feeder bus routes from Fort Bend County where most single occupant vehicle commuters are driving from, or the dedicated transit lanes could also accommodate commuter routes directly into West Houston.

This image of a BRT facility in Argentina shows the opportunities to install a bus rapid transit network with dedicated lanes on Westheimer. BRTs can include quality facilities and ehnanced service such as real time passenger information, platform level boarding, and traffic signal priority.

Gobierno de la Ciudad Autonoma de Buenos Aires

NEW BRT LINE WITHIN BUS NETWORK



1.2: GESSNER AT WESTPARK: AN ACTIVE, TRANSIT-ORIENTED HUB

The Gessner at Westpark Drive area has been identified by the public and Steering Committee as a priority redevelopment area. Aging commercial strip centers, in addition to the availability of public land and proximity to residential density make it an optimal area to prompt placemaking. This could be initiated by targeting redevelopment of the Gessner Park and Ride (PR) into a TOD and pilot universal design interventions in the surrounding intersections.

1.2A. ENCOURAGE TOD DEVELOPMENT AT THE GESSNER PARK-AND-RIDE

The Gessner Park and Ride (PR) is an ideal site to promote mixed use TOD. The site is situated at the southeastern boundary of the study area and is the largest publicly-owned property in the area. Parking utilization does not surpass 15% on an average weekday and the site offers a transformative opportunity to repurpose a portion of this public land for a mixed-income Transit Oriented Development (TOD) community. This could have a twofold benefit for METRO in the form of 'value-capture.' First, the underperforming public site can be leveraged to attract private investment and catalyze redevelopment in the surrounding area. In turn, increments in property valuation can be used to finance additional transit capital improvements in the surrounding area and/or enhanced service. The second value capture opportunity lies in the potential for METRO to generate a revenue stream from leasing portions of the property to private investment that can also be leveraged to fund more capital projects and/or service. Value capture could attract residents by expanding mixed income housing choices near transit, particularly for workers commuting to Downtown Houston on the Westpark Express 151 or utilizing the high-frequency Gessner 46 route. The first step is to coordinate with METRO to perform a more in-depth market study on the property through a cooperative agreement.

TOD DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AT PARK-AND-RIDE

1.2B. IMPLEMENT PUBLIC REALM AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN IMPROVEMENTS

Access can be improved significantly to both the Gessner PR and Gessner Route 46 bus stops by piloting universal design improvements at the area's major intersections. Wider sidewalks, ADA ramps, audible and tactile cues, marked crosswalks, and pedestrian refuge islands are a handful of strategies that can be combined to enhance universal accessibility in this area. These improvements also support enhanced access from the newly developed Westpark Loop Trail, to continue building on prior investments in the District.

PUBLIC REALM AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN IMPROVEMENTS

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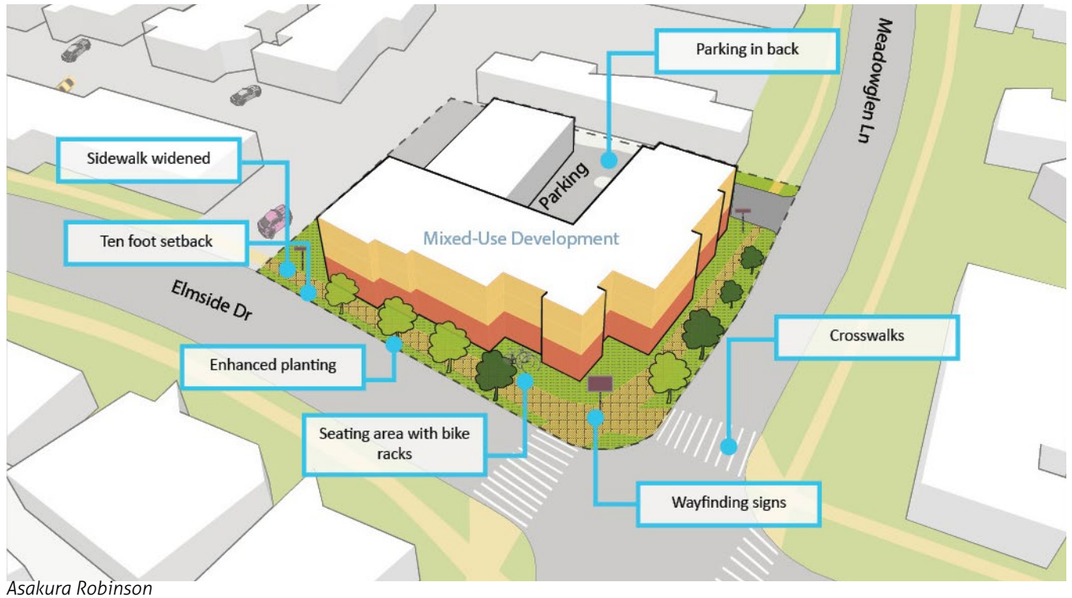
MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES



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The small strip retail center on the northeast corner of Elmside Drive and Meadowglen Lane is one of the few commercial uses located within the concentration of residential multi-family development in the eastern portion of the study area. It is therefore a prime location to provide neighborhood-serving retail that serves as a gathering space for residents and improves quality of life. However, an unused parking lot sits at an important corner, and the center itself has insufficient services for current residents. Encouraging a redevelopment of this center would help drive additional walkability and placemaking within the study area's residential heart.

1.3A. BUILD THE CASE FOR A MIXED-USE REDEVELOPMENT

A walkable, mixed-use redevelopment of the property would increase street activity and walkability in the area. This would feature ground-floor, retail uses fronting the sidewalk with transparent and engaging facades, and residencies on upper floors. Retail tenants can take advantage of the sidewalk and landscape improvements that the Westchase District has designed and is implementing on Elmside Drive. Parking should be relocated behind the building. Setbacks in the area are regulated by the City of Houston at 25 feet; pursuing an exception to 10 feet would allow a developer to use most of the available square footage of the property and making redevelopment more economically feasible than in areas where 40-60 foot required setbacks currently exist.

In order to help propel a new development forward, the District could commission a market study focusing on the local market for neighborhood-serving retail businesses such as coffee shops, higher-quality convenience stores, or independently owned fast-casual or table-service restaurants. These types of businesses can serve neighborhood residents and offer opportunities for local ownership and employment of area residents.

1.3B. IMPROVE WALKABLE CONNECTIONS TO ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

Additional improvements in the public and private realms would further increase walkability and street-based activity in the Elmside and Meadowglen area, and encourage local residents to walk to the existing retail property or a potential new mixed-use development.

IMPROVE GARDEN APARTMENT ACCESS POINTS

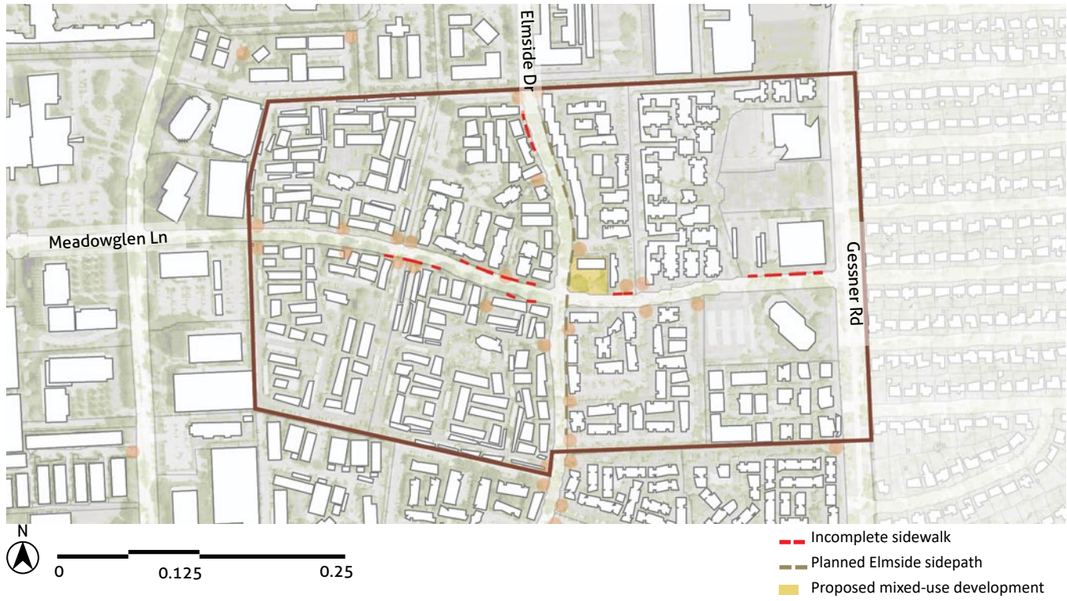
As shown in the map on the right-hand page, the Elmside/Meadowglen area's garden apartment complexes have many local access points that are oriented only for vehicle entrances and exits. These include all of the access points that are closest to the retail property at Elmside and Meadowglen. Encouraging the owners and managers of these apartment complexes to include a pedestrian entrance and exit at all of their access points would encourage residents to walk rather than drive short distances to their destinations. While some complexes have had concerns about safety in installing pedestrian gates, using up-to-date technologies such as electronic key-fob or card access would help to decrease the potential for unauthorized access. Recommendation 2.3, "Create a Connectivity and Walkability Toolkit for Property Owners," suggests a potential mechanism for promoting this type of increased pedestrian access to garden apartment complexes throughout the area.

UPGRADE SIDEWALK CONDITIONS

The District is already taking a major step forward in adding a new six-foot sidewalk with landscaping on the east side of Elmside that will extend from Westheimer to the Westpark Tollway, which will provide significant benefits to the Elmside and Meadowglen area. Other sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure in the area should also receive upgrades, including installation of ADA ramps at all four corners of the Elmside and Meadowglen intersection, and adjustment of broken or uneven sidewalk sections on nearby blocks.

GARDEN APARTMENT ACCESS POINTS IN AREA

SIDEWALK CONDITIONS TO IMPROVE



1.4: SOUTHWEST STUDY AREA: CONNECTIVITY TO STIMULATE CHANGE

The southwest corner of the study area includes a large concentration of aging light industrial, warehousing, and office properties that have lower property values than many of the predominantly residential and office areas in the remaining portion of the study area. It also includes essentially all of the vacant property that is not part of the single-owner West 8 property. This gives the area strong potential for redevelopment, particularly in the medium- to long-term once some of the other catalytic redevelopment projects suggested in this section have begun to move forward.

1.4A. MAKE CRITICAL INFILL STREET CONNECTIONS

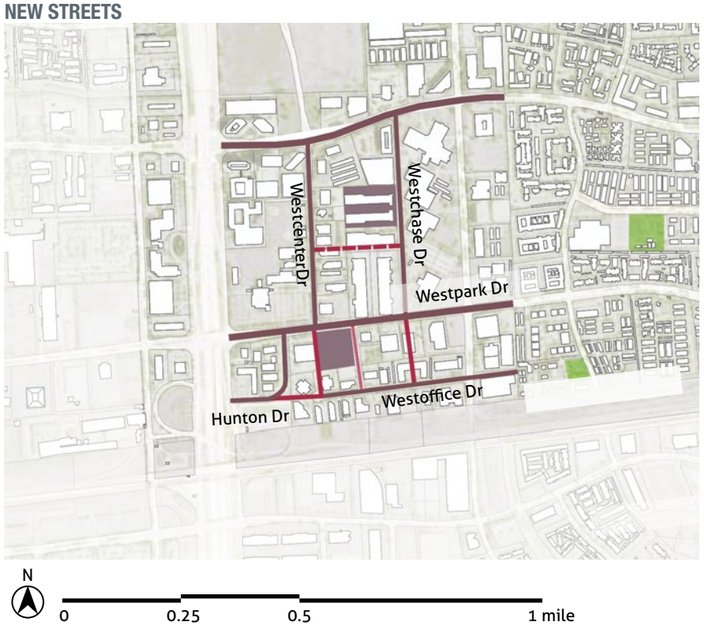
The southwest study area's extremely large superblocks create difficulties for walkability, as well as for future traffic circulation if the land uses in the area intensify. As the area redevelops, there is an opportunity for the District to work with new property owners and developers to ensure a more consistent circulation pattern.

One immediate opportunity for improving the area's street grid would be to connect Westoffice Drive and Hunton Drive in order to provide the area below Westpark Drive with a more immediate outlet to the Sam Houston Tollway. This would require working with the owners of 10590 Westoffice Drive, 10595 Westoffice Drive, and 10575 Westpark Drive to secure ownership or an easement to extend Westoffice Drive through the edge of their properties, where no use more intensive than a parking lot currently exists.

Other opportunities for improvement include:

- Locating a new street to connect Westcenter Drive and Westchase Drive in order to break up the superblock between Westpark Drive and Richmond Avenue. This superblock is currently fully occupied, and challenging to cut through with an infill street, because no property lines provide a straight connection from Westcenter to Westchase. However, the superblock is also nearly 0.4 miles long from north to south, severely inhibiting walkability. Future redevelopment interest in the area may offer opportunities for a public-private partnership that would encourage greater connectivity.
- Connecting Westcenter and Westchase Drives through from Westpark to Westoffice Drive, and eliminating Westmart Drive altogether. This would be another ambitious undertaking given that property lines in the area are not directly adjacent to the potential connections of Westcenter or Westchase Drives. However, future redevelopment may provide an opportunity to rationalize the street grid in this way.

NEW STREETS



1.4B. TARGET DEVELOPMENT OF PATIO HOMES AND SIMILAR RESIDENTIAL TYPOLOGIES

Property values for developed properties in the southwest study area tend to cluster around $15-$23 per square foot, compared to $25 and up elsewhere in the study area. This presents an opportunity for potential development of patio homes and other residential typologies that would diversify the study area's housing stock and potentially help attract additional employees from the District's offices, or young families, to move into the study area. Large vacant properties at the corners of Westmart and Westpark Drive, and Briarpark and Westpark Drive, also present opportunities for new development.

PATIO HOMES

Google Street View

CONCEPT 2

Create a Walkable Public Realm for People

The study area, and the Westchase District as a whole, have many of the key ingredients for a highly walkable public realm. The District has been committed to growing a substantive trail and green space network, as seen in the Westchase District Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan and the recently-completed Westpark Trail located on the southern edge of the study area. The District also has large numbers of mature trees that provide shade and reduce the heat island effect for pedestrians.

The recommendations in this section build on these essential assets by incorporating walkability into the neighborhood fabric, activating setbacks and connecting private properties with the public realm.

Recommendations in this section include:

Recommendation 2.1. Activate Walkable Loops and Networks with Public Realm Interventions

2.1A. Develop Paths along Property "Seams" - The Lanes at Westchase*

Recommendation 2.2. Redefine Setbacks to Connect Buildings with the Public Realm

Recommendation 2.3. Create a Connectivity and Walkability Toolkit for Property Owners

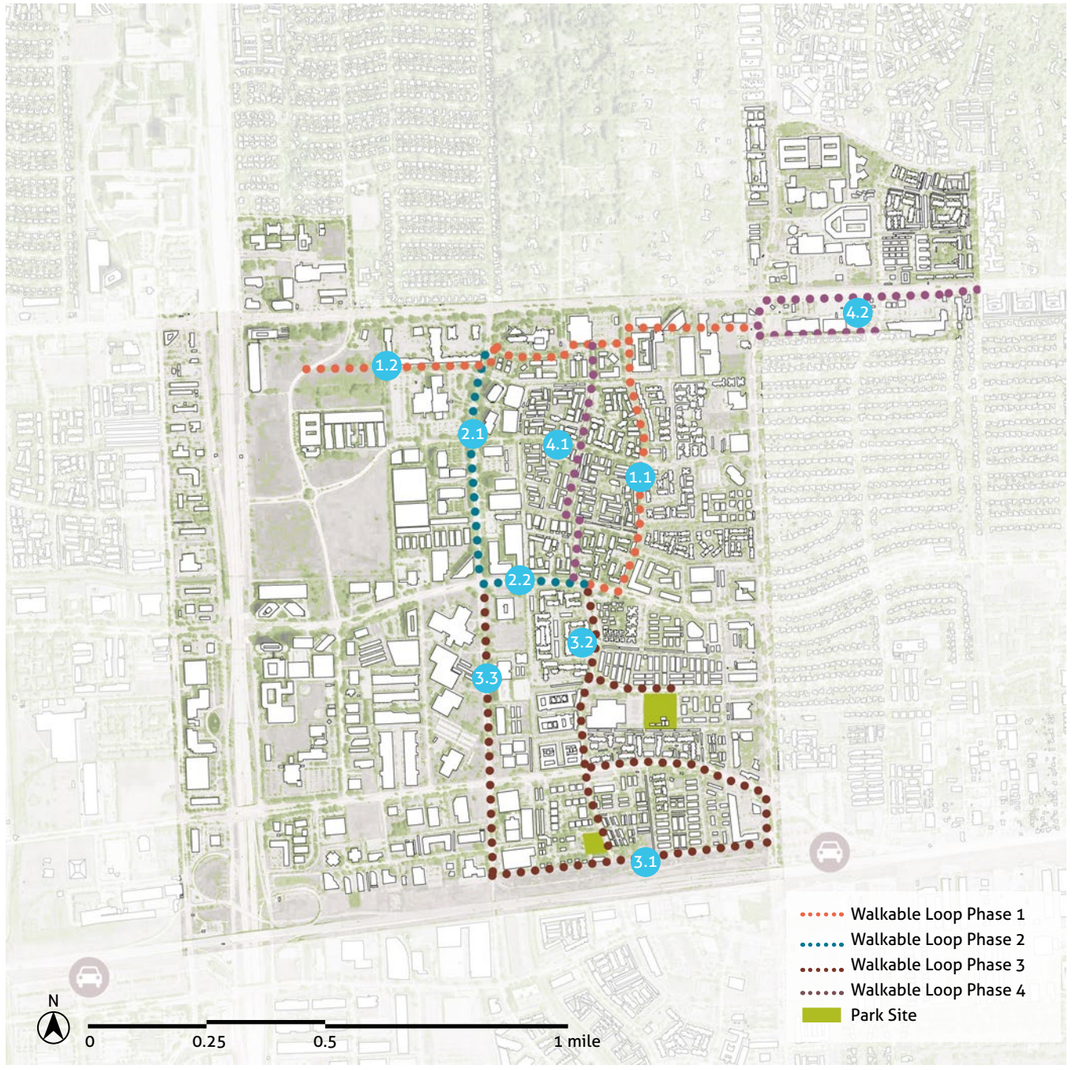
Recommendation 2.4. Coordinate with the City to Ensure CIP Projects Advance Walkability

2.1: ACTIVATE WALKABLE LOOPS WITH PUBLIC REALM INTERVENTIONS

The study area's large setbacks provide a major opportunity to create high-quality shared-use paths and larger sidewalks that create a walkable network throughout the study area. These paths can be combined into walkable "loops" that facilitate exercise and allow residents and employees to choose the length of their routes through the neighborhood. The Elmside/ Woodchase shared-use path currently in the design phase is an example of one walkable segment that includes art and exercise equipment as activation elements along the path. Walkable loops and segments should include:

- Larger sidewalks (at least six feet) or shared-use path designs
- Clear wayfinding including directional signage, maps, and mileage estimates for each loop
- Distinctive colors incorporated into the paths and wayfinding systems to mark each loop
- Activation features including public art, exercise equipment, and play equipment
- Green infrastructure and habitat elements that minimize flooding and attract local birds and butterflies
- Programming such as organized group walks or runs, podcast suggestions for walks of various lengths, or family-oriented nature walks can help promote the use of these walkable loops.

WALKABLE LOOPS WITH SUGGESTED PHASING



PHASE 1

- 1.1 Current improvements on Elmside/Woodchase
- 1.2 Promenade development begins

PHASE 2

- 2.1 Connect Promenade to Briarpark Dr
- 2.2 Richmond connection to Elmside/Woodchase

PHASE 3

- 3.1 Westpark Trail enhancements
- 3.2 Connect trails to parks
- 3.3 Utlize setbacks on Briarpark to connect loop

PHASE 4

- 4.1 Infill path between properties (may occur sooner)
- 4.2 Extend Promenade east of Gessner

2.1A. DEVELOP PATHS ALONG PROPERTY SEAMS - "THE LANES AT WESTCHASE"

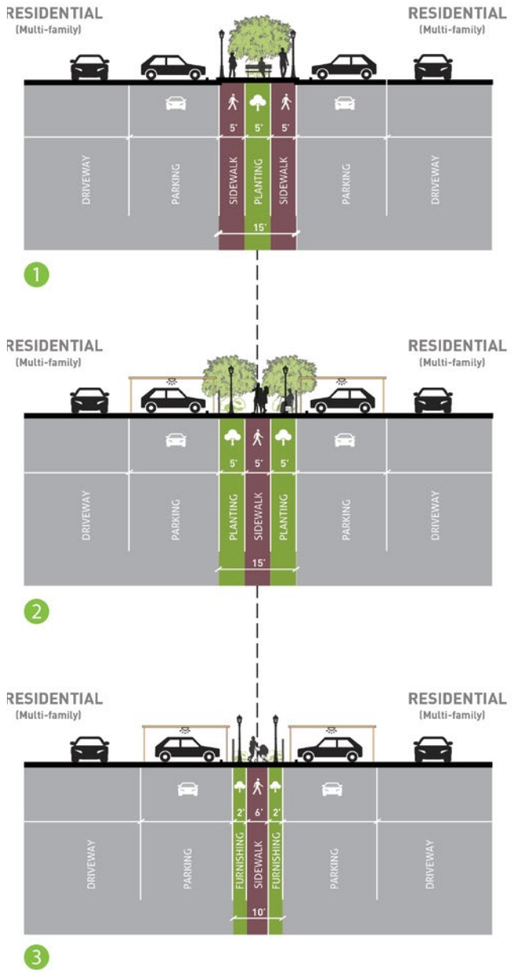
Superblocks throughout the study area inhibit walkability by forcing pedestrians to travel significant distances before reaching a connecting street that may go in their preferred direction. Generally, blocks that are approximately 300 feet in length or less are considered "walkable"; the study area has some blocks that are 1,200 feet in length in its residential sections.

In the residential sector on the eastern side of the study area, many of these superblocks are formed by groups of multiple apartment complexes; the property lines internal to each block are often formed by fences that divide parking lots on either side. This presents an opportunity to work with property owners to open up these "seams" for pedestrians by removing fences and providing a five-foot to 7.5-foot easement on each side of the property line, allowing for a total 10- to 15-foot walking path that benefits residents and pedestrians in the area. Opportunities also exist to fill in these paths on office and retail properties, using parking lots and other relatively inactive spaces. Because the paths are relatively narrow compared to a full infill street, most properties should be able to re-orient using angled or parallel parking and lose relatively few parking spaces.

In order to address any safety concerns caused by removing fences, paths should be well-lit and should be designed to facilitate "eyes on the street" from neighboring apartments. They should also function as high-quality shared-use paths that facilitate play and walking year-round, with significant tree canopy and strong design connecting these paths to the neighborhood's walkable loops.

This flexible strategy allows the Westchase District to work with property owners in key areas to negotiate the potential for easements and determine how to finance these paths. Design strategies for each path can also be crafted in collaboration with owners, residents, and employees on a particular block.

POTENTIAL SECTIONS FOR "THE LANES": 10 OR 15 FEET



BEFORE: FENCES DIVIDE APARTMENT COMPLEX PARKING LOTS

AFTER: A PATH CONNECTS COMPLEXES, PROMOTES WALKING, AND BREAKS UP SUPERBLOCKS

2.2: REDEFINE SETBACKS TO CONNECT BUILDINGS WITH THE PUBLIC REALM

Required setbacks in the study area vary from 10 feet to 60 feet; the larger setbacks of 40 to 60 feet are required by Westchase Community Association covenants. The distance between buildings and the street is often further enlarged by development patterns such as the prevalence of surface parking lots at garden apartments and office buildings. In contrast, most highly walkable neighborhoods have much smaller setbacks or place development directly along the sidewalk; this offers pedestrians direct connections to building entries from the sidewalk, encourages retail stores that offer community services and visual interest, and increases the sense of street enclosure and neighborhood character. Large setbacks of 40-60 feet are ultimately not conducive to walkability.

The study team recommends changing the following setbacks:

- Remove all Westchase Community Association covenant requirements for minor streets in the southwest study area, including Westchase Drive, Westoffice Drive, and Westmart Drive. City of Houston minimum required setbacks of 10 feet or more will still apply to these properties. Removing the large setback allows multiple potential reuses of these properties, including potential redevelopment into townhomes, patio homes, or other desired residential typologies.
- Reduce Westchase Community Association covenant requirements to 30 feet along major auto corridors, including Richmond Avenue, Briarpark Drive, and Westpark Drive. This will make these requirements consistent with the current setback of many existing properties, and will reduce the large "moats" of green space that separate building entries from the street.

Reducing setbacks can also make the economics of development more conducive to desired development types such as mixed-use or patio home development. On the right, a high-level study of 0 Westmart Drive, a vacant property in the southwest study area, illustrates why reducing setbacks can promote development.

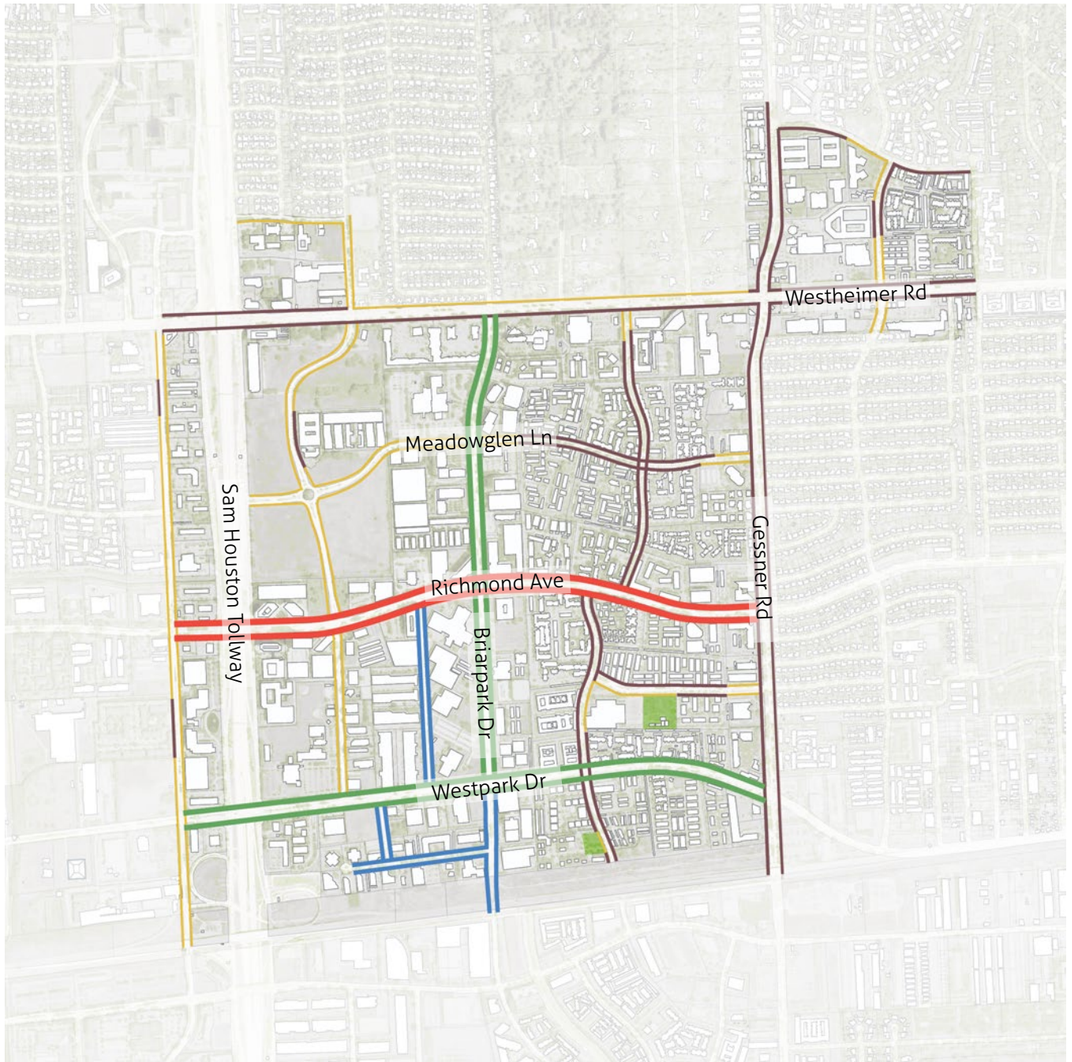
0 WESTMART DRIVE

The below case study focuses on 0 Westmart Drive, one of the largest vacant properties in the study area other than the West 8 property. This property currently has WCA-required setbacks of 40 feet on Westmart Drive and 50 feet on Westpark Drive. The below back-of envelope analysis illustrates the potential impact of setback reductions in making a patio home project feasible on this property: the property could accommodate six additional potential homes with the recommended setback reductions compared to the current requirements. This would allow a potential developer to gain profits from the sale of six additional properties, which could be the difference between a decision to invest in the area or find a different opportunity.

Square Footage	152,460
Estimated Price Per SF	$23
Total Acquisition Cost	$3,506,580
PATIO HOME DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGY: ASSUMING 80% BUILDABLE LAND	
Buildable Land SF w/ Existing Setbacks	93,888
Total # Potential Unites w/ Existing Setback (@2,500 land sf/unit)	37
Buildable Land SF w/ Reducaed Setbacks	109,488
Total # Potential Units w/ Reducaed Setbacks (@2,500 land sf/unit)	43
TOTAL INCREASE IN CONSTRUCTABLE UNITS W/ REDUCED SETBACKS	6

There are, of course, additional factors that determine whether a residential developer would invest in this piece of property. These include the potential sale price of homes compared to their construction cost, and the ability to make a similar return on property elsewhere that has lower land costs. However, reducing setbacks can certainly move one controllable factor in the direction of facilitating new development.

EXISTING SETBACK REQUIREMENTS



2.3: CREATE A CONNECTIVITY AND WALKBILITY TOOLKIT FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

One central and immediate challenge within the study area is to ensure that private properties adequately connect to all of the proposed public realm improvements in this report. Currently, many apartment complexes have only a single functioning pedestrian gate, which may discourage residents from walking even if attractive paths and trails are available. Similarly, although this report recommends reducing setbacks, in the immediate future many office buildings will still have large, inactive setbacks that encourage employees to drive to lunch rather than walk.

Westchase District should develop a program to facilitate public-private partnerships around small projects that better connect the private and public realms. This would likely take the form of a cost-sharing arrangement; for example, if a complex agrees to install a new pedestrian gate near an important intersection, the District could provide funds for a new sidewalk that connects that gate to the existing sidewalks in the area. Such a program could be grant-funded through programs such as America Walks, or could be sponsored by local hospitals and other health-related companies that desire to encourage walking.

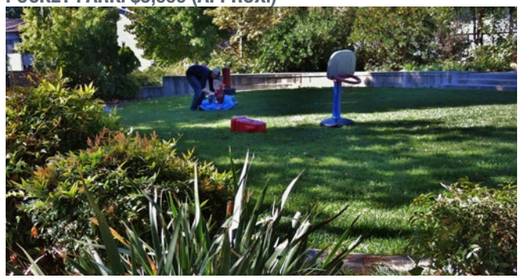
A "Connectivity and Walkability Toolkit" could memorialize this program for property owners and encourage their participation by showing how these small interventions can enhance quality of life for residents, and can be cost-effective for both property owners and the District. Program and toolkit elements could include those shown on the following page.

SIDEWALK: $60 PER LINEAR FOOT

TRASH RECEPTACLES: $1,500 PER RECEPTACLE

SOLAR LIGHTING: $500 PER LIGHT

POCKET PARK: $5,000 (APPROX.)



GATES: $1,000 PER GATE

SEATING: $1,000 PER BENCH

THE LANES AT WESTCHASE PATHS: VARIABLE COST

Asakura Robinson

2.4: COORDINATE WITH THE CITY TO ENSURE CIP PROJECTS ADVANCE WALKABILITY

Future infrastructure investments provide an opportunity to make a lasting impact. These opportunities should be leveraged to advance the community's goals expressed in the Livable Centers study and other related District plans pertaining to issues of walkability, safety, and stormwater.

GESSNER ROAD CIP PROJECT

Reconstruction of Gessner Road is currently planned from Richmond Avenue to Buffalo Bayou. As of the date this study was published, the project seeks to expand the amount of travel lanes from 4 to 6, expand sidewalks, and install a grade separated flyover bridge at the intersection with Westheimer Road. The Westchase District is interested in seeing the City of Houston study this project further for feasibility and consistency with the City's Complete Streets and Transportation Plan (HCSTP) prior to implementation.

The intersection at Gessner and Westheimer is highly trafficked by multiple transportation modes, registering as one of the highest transfer counts in the METRO bus network for both ridership and bicycle counts. A feasibility and Complete Streets study could help refine and improve the proposed project by:

- Identifying potential conflicts between transportation modes and incorporating findings into a design strategy that reduces conflicts and improves safety for all road users.
- Accounting for the planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line on Westheimer Blvd.
- Examining potential impacts on local businesses.
- Considering community input such as the Westchase District's goal of spurring mixed use, walkable development adjacent to this intersection.

WALKABLE MEDIANS

Asakura Robinson

WALKABLE LANDSCAPE WITH GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Asakura Robinson

CONCEPT 3

Provide Transportation Options for Commuters, Visitors, and Residents

Many of the walkability improvements suggested in Concepts 1 and 2 operate at a very local level within the study area: they examine ways to positively impact the experience of pedestrians in the study area with good design and changes to the public realm. These improvements can encourage local residents and employees to avoid driving for short trips by making walking in the study area pleasant, interesting, and efficient.

Concept 3 provides a complement to these walkability improvements by examining ways to promote alternative modes of transportation for commuters, visitors, and residents who travel to and from the study area. Recommendations include improvements to bicycle network connectivity, and provision of new transit options such as park-and-ride and MAX service to increase transit mode share for Westchase District residents and employees. These interventions can help to decrease traffic congestion and improve air quality in the study area. In addition, for those employees and visitors who do drive to the study area, this concept examines shared parking strategies: parking lots that can accommodate multiple land uses throughout the course of the day, which decreases the need for individual parking lots for every building in the study area. Shared parking helps improve street-level activity and safety by diminishing the number of large, inactive tracts of parking; it can also decrease the amount of impervious surface in the area and improve water quality and drainage.

Recommendations in this section include:

Recommendation 3.1. Implement Bicycling Improvements and Encourage End-of-Trip Facilities

- 3.1A. Connect Pedestrians and Bicyclists to Brays Bayou
- 3.1B. Connect across Beltway to Library Loop Trail

Recommendation 3.2. Develop a Shared Parking Program

Recommendation 3.3. Examine Opportunities for Additional Park-and-Ride Systems

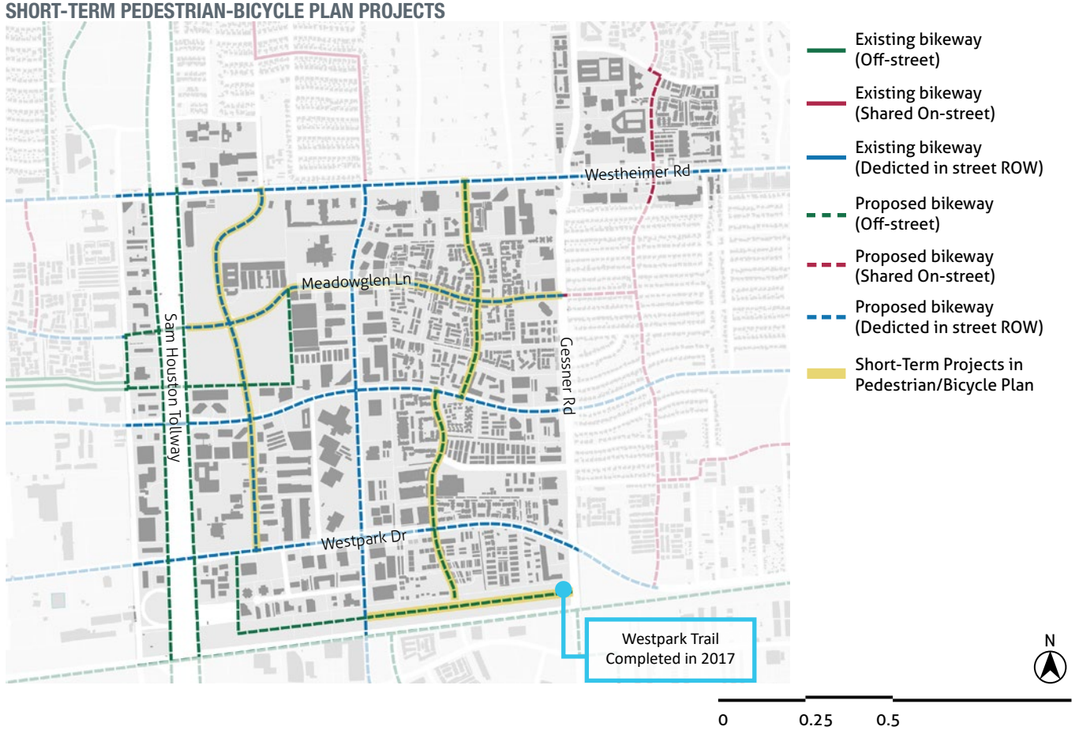
3.1: IMPLEMENT BICYCLING IMPROVEMENTS & ENCOURAGE END-OF-TRIP FACILITIES

The Westchase District has committed to improving access for bicycling commuters and residents through the recently-adopted Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan. The plan recommends several near-term implementation projects within the study area boundaries, including:

- Elmside / Woodchase Connection: This project is a north-south neighborhood bikeway facility connection that is currently under design from the Westpark Trail to Westheimer Road. This facility can either be on-street or off street (depending on ROW and roadway characteristics). An offset intersection at Richmond requires special consideration of widening sidewalk on either the north or south side to allow bicycles to safely access intersection and stop to make crossing feasible.
- Intersection Improvements: This recommendation pertained to improving ADA ramps, crosswalk treatments for both bikes and pedestrians and increased sidewalk width within 250' – 500' of intersection. Intersection treatments were classified as mid-block crossings and signalized intersections. Various treatments depended on characteristics of intersection.
- Seagler Road / Westcenter Drive: This is a short-term implementation project to restripe this roadway for a bicycle facility, improve sidewalks on both sides of the roadway, and restrict parking along the roadway at certain locations and times during the day.

While the Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan was completed less than one year before the completion of this study, work on the Elmside/Woodchase connection that is planned to connect residents with the new Westpark Trail has already commenced. The remaining public realm projects should begin design over the course of the next three to five years.

SHORT-TERM PEDESTRIAN-BICYCLE PLAN PROJECTS



END-OF-TRIP FACILITIES

In addition to public realm interventions, the District should work with private property owners to encourage bicycling by ensuring access to end-of-trip facilities. These facilities are designated places, often within office buildings or other destinations that support cyclists, joggers, and walkers in using alternative ways to travel to work rather than driving or taking public transit. These types of facilities include secured bicycle parking, locker facilities and maintenance areas. By investing in end-of-trip facilities, businesses and governments can improve employee health, reduce parking costs, recruit talented workers and create a positive, environmentally friendly image. Promoting H-GAC's End-of-Trip Facilities Guide to local office tenants and property owners could be an effective way to spread the word about the benefits and ease of implementation of some of these facilities.

One opportunity to fund new bicycle racks is to apply for the Houston Bike Racks Program through Go Healthy Houston (http://gohealthyhouston.org/hbr/hbrapplication/). This program is open to management districts, super neighborhoods and TIRZs, for application in public right-of-way, and is also open to commercial property owners, businesses and civic associations. There are two bike rack styles available through the program: a single bike rack that holds 4 bikes and a wave bike rack that holds 7 bikes. Westchase District should not only apply on its own, but also encourage local businesses to apply for this program.

BICYCLE SHARE STATIONS

Westchase District can also continue to push to become part of the Houston BCycle network of bike share stations or attract its own vendor. These stations could be branded with Westchase District logo and partnered with employment wellness programs to provide a network of stations. Currently the closest station to Westchase is located in the Memorial Management District. However, Westchase is primed for bike share locations as it offers many community attractions that would benefit from short trip opportunities that bike share provides. A full plan should be developed for bicycle share station locations, but opportunities include locations along the existing and planned shared use trails, as well as in potential new signature parks, along the proposed Promenade surrounded by high-intensity land uses, and along the "walkable loops" proposed throughout the study area.

H-GAC END OF TRIP FACILITIES GUIDE

H-GAC

BCYCLE STATIONS

BCycle

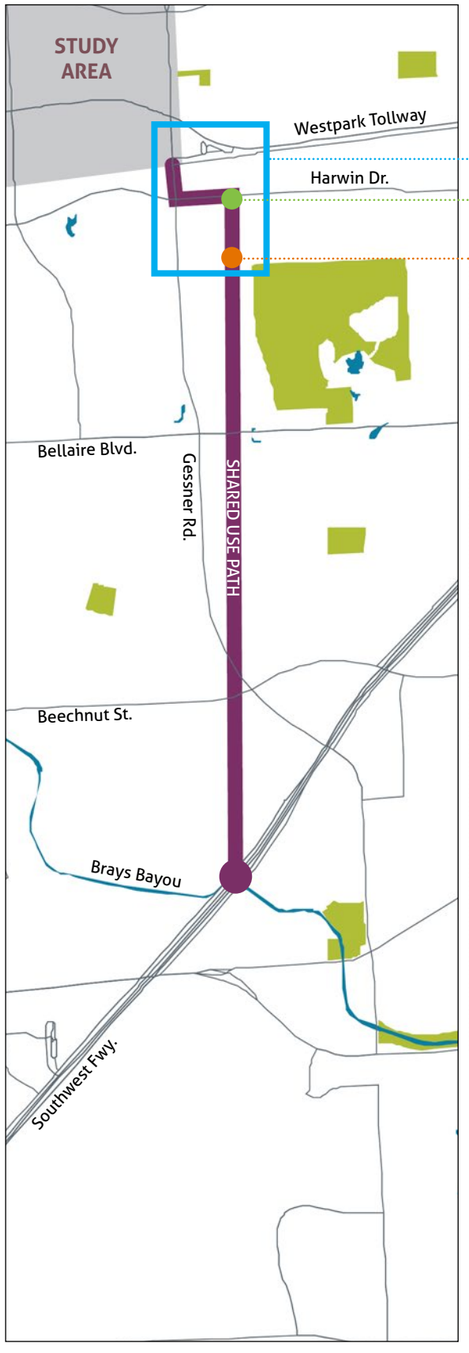
3.1: IMPLEMENT BICYCLING IMPROVEMENTS AND ENCOURAGE END-OF-TRIP FACILITIES

3.1A. CONNECT PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS TO BRAYS BAYOU

Westchase District bicyclists on the western side of the Sam Houston Tollway have a clear connection to Brays Bayou via the Brays Bayou Connector Trail. However, the new Westpark Trail does not yet have a clear method for bicyclists on the eastern side of the District to connect to the Bayou, a major natural asset in the area. This recommendation provides an alternative connection south from Westchase to Brays Bayou via an existing CenterPoint utility corridor just east of Gessner Road. The total length of the proposed route is 2.9 miles. This route would utilize the potential on-street connection and off-street shared use path along Gessner Road to Harwin Drive and then progress south along the utility corridor via a shared use path. The utility corridor is currently blocked north of Sands Point Road due to an apartment complex that has fenced in the easement for parking; access in this area would need to be negotiated to complete the trail.

This shared use path would be similar to the recently completed HCC Campus Trail, a 10-foot wide concrete path between Westheimer Road and Richmond Avenue with a mid-block crossing at Meadowglen Lane. This connection is identified on the City of Houston Bike Plan as a long term future project. Placement within the utility corridor, either on the west side or east side, will require further study based on CenterPoint approval and delineation of path at major intersections. Coordination on funding and construction would need to take place between Westchase District and the Southwest Management District, given that most of this shared-use path runs through the Southwest District boundaries.

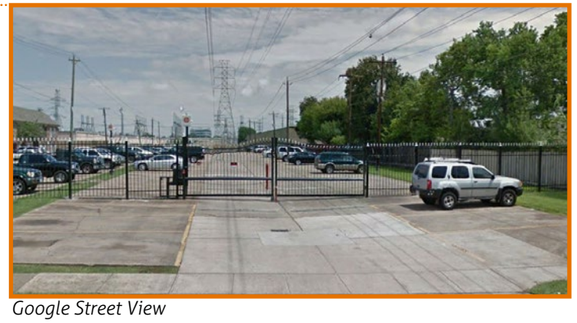
BRAYS BAYOU SHARED-USE PATH DETAILS



AERIAL VIEW OF HARWIN/SANDS POINT AREA

LOOKING SOUTH ON CENTERPOINT EASEMENT FROM HARWIN

LOOKING NORTH FROM SANDS POINT: PARKING LOT OBSTACLE



Google Street View

3.1B. CONNECT BICYCLES COMFORTABLY ACROSS THE BELTWAY

As stated in the Westchase District Pedestrian/ Bicycle Plan, there are six intersections along the Sam Houston Tollway, or "Beltway," within the Westchase District (three in the study area – Westheimer, Richmond, and Westpark Dr.) that deserve intersection enhancements to provide a better experience for vehicles and pedestrians walking and bicycling. These enhancements include:

- Adjusting corner radii where appropriate to increase corner pedestrian area and reduce motor vehicle turning speeds
- Providing separate bicycle and pedestrian channels within crosswalks and widening sidewalks along underpasses to 10' or more for shared use
- Providing enhanced lighting treatments, traffic separation and protection, hardscape and decorative treatments.
- These enhancements could also be implemented at underpasses along Westpark Tollway.

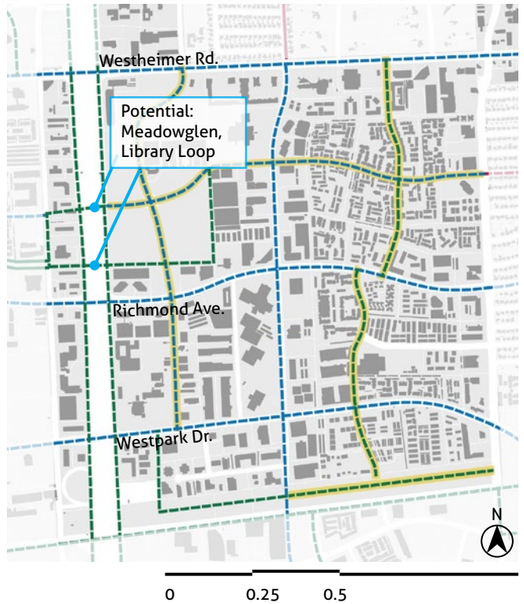
Another recommendation of the Pedestrian/ Bicycle Plan is to add new connections across the Beltway between Westheimer Road and Richmond Avenue, given the long distance between the two. Options include:

Connecting Library Loop Trail directly across the Beltway would either require an undercrossing or bridge crossing. An undercrossing from the Library Loop Trail across the Beltway to a vacant parcel on the east side would need to be a minimum of 16' wide and 400' long, with adequate lighting and video surveillance to provide security. This undercrossing would be exclusively for pedestrians and cyclists.

Another option is a cross-Beltway connection on Meadowglen Lane, which could be a bridge crossing for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists. This connection is referenced in the Greater West Houston Mobility Plan as well as the Ped/ Bike Plan. This connection would improve east/ west mobility across Westchase and alleviate congestion and vehicular traffic along parallel roadways. This crossing would require extensive coordination with multiple agencies and organizations and require the acquisition of multiple parcels, easements, and rights-of-way along the Beltway and adjacent streets.

Drainage, environmental impacts, adjacent property impacts, constructability, user safety and security as well as vertical ascent/descent necessary to reach the level of the bridge/ tunnel would need to be considered for any new undercrossing or bridge crossing.

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL BELTWAY CROSSING LOCATIONS



The Houston Municipal Code allows two or more different use classifications (except single-family residential) within one or more tracts to share parking spaces, and reduce their overall parking space requirements. Spaces may not be reserved or restricted to a specific use, and must be made available at all times for use by employees and customers.

The Carillon Shopping Center is a good existing example of this shared parking concept with multiple land use classifications utilizing the same parking space availability. There are multiple businesses that operate during different hours of the day, allowing parking to be utilized to the highest potential. There is also an opportunity for a shared parking program in the southwest area between Richmond Ave, Westpark Dr, Briarpark Dr, and Westcenter Dr. There are businesses, recreational facilities (the Quillian Center), and institutional uses such as churches located in close proximity to one another that would benefit from shared parking as well as increased circulation. This shared parking program in this area would allow more spaces to be utilized at all times throughout the day as well as provide an opportunity for additional businesses.

Westchase District should explore the opportunity to work with the City of Houston to define a Special Parking Area (SPA) or similar program that would provide the District more localized control over parking requirements for new or revitalized developments. This tool is very useful for areas that were developed in a traditional suburban retail style to allow more compact, walkable redevelopment. Using this SPA tool, the District can identify opportunities to provide centralized parking (either structured or surface) for clusters of businesses and mixed-use areas that are currently present, as well as designing shared-parking facilities for proposed mixed-use areas such as new development along Westheimer adjacent to the proposed Promenade.

SHARED PARKING OPPORTUNITY: SIGNATURE PARKS

The proposed signature park on the western end of the promenade within the West 8 property could share parking with adjacent office and mixed-use development.

3.3: EXAMINE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADDITIONAL PARK-AND-RIDE SYSTEMS

One of the keys to sustaining the rapid growth and expansion of the Westchase District's robust office market will be managing commuter congestion for office workers coming, going, and circulating within the District during the workday. Westchase must continue to work closely with regional transit providers such as METRO, Fort Bend County Transit, etc. in order to develop strong commuter transit connections for the District. While Westchase does have two existing park-and-ride lots, they were developed when Westchase was much more suburban in character, and the lots serve more as an origin of trips outside the area, rather than a destination. This provides benefit to the current residents of Westchase (and should be maintained), however additional park-and-ride service is needed to offer workers commuting into the district an alternative to driving.

In order to achieve the goal of improving regional transit connectivity to the Westchase District and study area, there are steps that need to be taken:

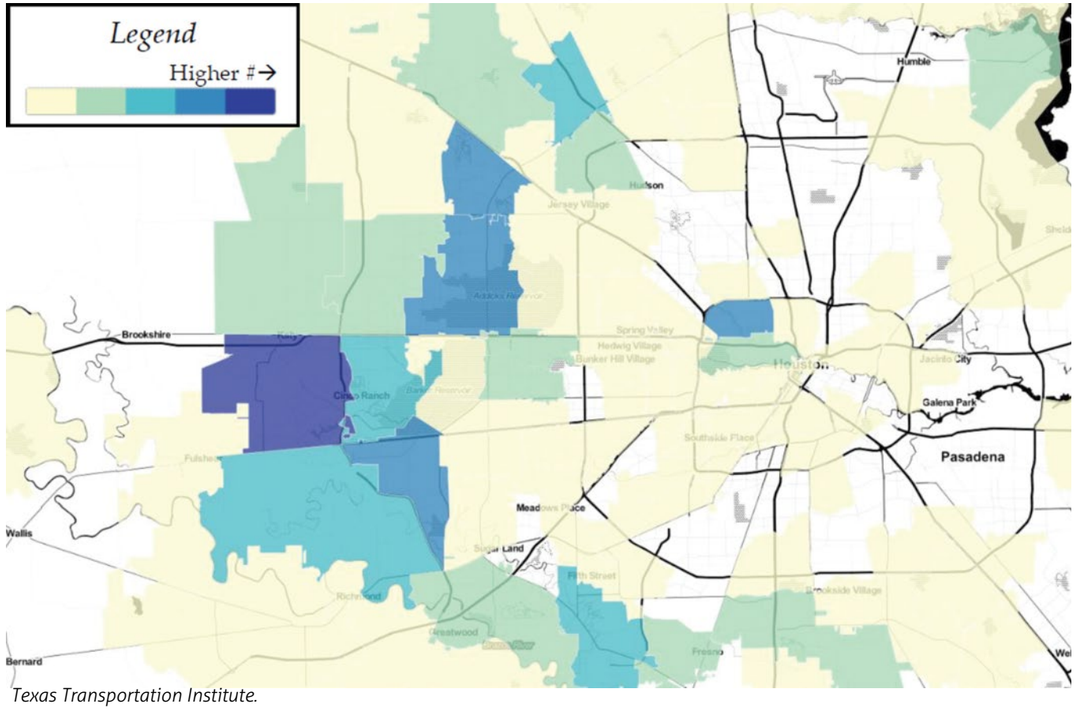
- Westchase needs to work with HCTRA, TxDOT, and others to add dedicated transit lanes to the Sam Houston Tollway and the Westpark Tollway as these facilities are upgraded or reconstructed. Connectivity of Westchase to the region's HOV network will greatly improve transit accessibility for the District's office employee population.
- In order to provide future transit commuters with circulation within the District during the workday, Westchase should implement a transit circulator/shuttle program.

There are two potential options for expanding the District's regional park-and-ride service and fast, frequent transit connectivity that align with other studies and plans that have been completed.

- MAX Lanes: The MaX (Managed eXpress) lane network aims to move the maximum number of people at maximum speed. These lanes are considered the next generation of METRO's successful high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes which are restricted to buses, carpool vans, and vehicles carrying more than one person. The MaX lane network would create a comprehensive, connected, two-way network along freeway lanes across the metro area (including loop freeways like IH 610 and the Sam Houston Tollway). The MaX lane network would provide fast all-day connections between major activity and employment centers. The MaX lane network would benefit Westchase with high quality, all-day transit service. This service would allow more access to employment in Westchase as well as provide residents with frequent service to major employment centers throughout Houston.
- New Park-and-Ride Service: Based on a Westchase Park-and-Ride Service study, performed by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI), the potential demand for private park-and-ride transit service to the Westchase District is comparable to that of the Fort Bend Express's Greenway or Uptown Route. This potential service would provide an alternative mode of transportation for residents living in Fort Bend County to commute to Westchase District. The potential parking locations would be at the existing METRO Kingsland and Addicks Park and Ride Lots, the Fort Bend Express Lots, and a new parking lot area near Westpark and Cinco Ranch. The potential drop-off locations in the Westchase District could be at the Westchase (Harwin) or Gessner Park-and-Ride locations as well as various stops at major employment centers along the way. The potential capture rate is around 7% of all commuters; however, this could be higher depending on potential partnerships, available parking and support from major employers in Westchase.

Westchase should work with METRO, the City of Houston, TxDOT and HCTRA to coordinate the proposed park-and-ride service with the MaX lane network. Both would provide an alternative mode of transportation and more frequent service to Westchase residents and employers.

TEXAS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE CALCULATION OF DEMAND FOR WESTCHASE PARK-AND-RIDE



Texas Transportation Institute.

PARK-AND-RIDE MAX LANES

Walter P. Moore.

PARK-AND-RIDE MAX LANES

Walter P. Moore.

CONCEPT 4

Develop High-Quality Housing for All Residents

The study area includes a large number of garden apartment complexes that have been relatively well-maintained, but are not oriented toward walkability and do not reflect the full spectrum of housing types that might attract Westchase District employees. There are also few homeownership options in the study area for renters who might be looking for their next steps into housing stability, or employees looking to purchase in the area where they work. Adding Class A rental options, new homeownership options, and housing designed to support family living will help ensure that all residents have high-quality housing options.

While the garden apartment complexes may not be the most up-to-date housing options in the Houston marketplace, they provide a valuable stock of quality rental housing at a relatively affordable cost, thanks to the joint efforts of property owners, the Westchase Community Association, and the Westchase District. This section examines ways to add additional housing options to the study area without displacing the diverse group of existing residents, including families and young professionals, who currently live in these garden apartment residences.

Recommendations in this section include:

Recommendation 4.1. Improve Homeownership Availability and Attraction

Recommendation 4.2. Grow Innovative Educational Programming to Support Families

Recommendation 4.3. Adapt Westchase's Residential Brand

4.1: IMPROVE HOMEOWNERSHIP AVAILABILITY AND ATTRACTION

Residents of the study area report a need for additional homeownership options to help diversify housing typologies in the study area. Currently, there are seven condominium properties in the study area, all of which are concentrated near the intersection of Woodchase Drive and Westpark Drive. The Westchase Manor subdivision, located on Briarpark Drive just north of Richmond Avenue, contains 69 large single-family patio homes. These are the only homeownership options in the area.

OPPORTUNITY: ADD DENSE SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSING

Building additional market-rate, dense single-family housing such as patio homes or townhomes could help to retain families in the study area, or attract professional Westchase District employees to live within a walkable distance of their offices.

One current barrier to patio home construction in the Westchase area is relatively high property prices combined with lower comparable values for nearby single-family homes than available in other neighborhoods. Property prices are high because the study area is largely built out, with the West 8 property and a few properties in the southwest study area as the only vacant parcels. This means prospective developers would generally have to purchase an operating building, which is more costly than purchasing a tract of vacant land. However, regardless of the property prices, the overriding factor for many townhome developers is the sales price that homes will be able to command. The below basic analyses show why other neighborhoods might currently be more competitive for townhome investment than the study area; developers might be willing to pay even higher prices for land if they are expecting high sales prices that will allow significant profit. Case 1 is similar to current study area conditions; Case 2 might be more similar to portions of Upper Kirby or Montrose. While it is still possible to profit in the study area, margins are slimmer and there is an opportunity cost to investing in the study area versus elsewhere.

CASE STUDIES: PATIO HOME DEVELOPMENT IN TWO AREAS

Case 1: Lower Land Cost/Lower Sales Price

Land Price/SF	$23
Total SF	2,500
Total Land Price	$57,500
Construction Cost/SF	$100
Total SF	2,700
Total Construction Cost	$270,000
Soft Costs	$37,575
TOTAL DEVELOPMENT COST	**$365,075**
TOTAL SALES PRICE	**$400,000**
PROFIT	**$34,925**

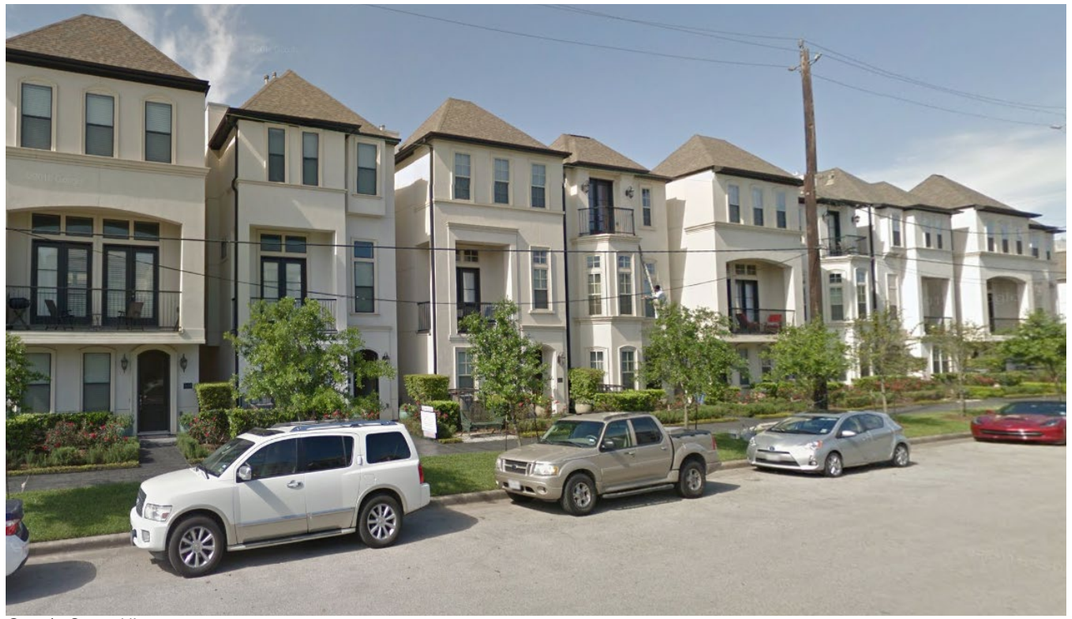
Case 2: Higher Land Cost/Higher Sales Price

Land Price/SF	$50
Total SF	2,500
Total Land Price	$125,000
Construction Cost/SF	$100
Total SF	2,700
Total Construction Cost	$270,000
Soft Costs	$37,575
TOTAL DEVELOPMENT COST	**$432,575**
TOTAL SALES PRICE	**$550,000**
PROFIT	**$117,425**

In order to change the financial picture for single-family homeownership developers, there are several opportunities Westchase District and partners can examine.

- Catalytic projects, such as the Promenade, will increase sales prices nearby. Recommendation 1.1A suggests areas where townhomes could be constructed near the proposed Promenade.
- Developers mentioned school quality as another core asset that can drive sales prices. Recommendation 4.2 suggests ways that the District could partner with Sneed Elementary to help support additional signature programming for existing and future students.
- Lower land costs in areas with vacant properties or underutilized warehousing properties can drive up margins for developers. Recommendation 1.4B identifies additional potential properties where townhomes could be built in the southwest study area. Westchase District can keep tabs on these properties and potentially find an opportunity for a public-private partnership that would encourage homeownership development on these properties.
- Encouraging dense single-family development as a component of larger master development strategies for the West 8 property could also help bring a balanced set of housing options to the study area.

PATIO HOMES IN HOUSTON



Google Street View

OPPORTUNITY: EXPLORE LIMITED-EQUITY COOPERATIVE CONVERSIONS

Converting garden apartment complexes into ownership properties using a model known as a "limited equity cooperative" could be another innovative opportunity to extend the benefits of homeownership to existing study area residents. Cooperatives are similar to condominiums in that they enable group ownership of a multifamily property. However, in a cooperative, residents own shares in a corporation that in turn owns the property (unlike in a condominium, where residents own their portion of the property directly). Limited-equity cooperatives incorporate subsidy, allowing residents to purchase a more limited and affordable number of shares in order to establish an ownership share in the building and occupy their own unit. This allows affordable ownership to be extended to families who would not be able to afford a unit without subsidy.

The garden apartments in the study area have been well-maintained and are good candidates for cooperative conversion. Some barriers include a potential lack of owner interest; lack of experience with cooperatives in Houston; and the need to organize existing residents to purchase in order to perform a cooperative conversion. Raising funds to subsidize a limited-equity cooperative can also be difficult. However, the National Cooperative Bank operates nationwide to finance cooperatives, and the Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation can provide up to $2 million in loans through their Multifamily Direct Lending Program to encourage limited-equity cooperative development. Organizing educational programming for local residents about this possibility, and working with potentially interested property owners and the City of Houston, could help move the conversation about conversion forward in the study area.

PULLMAN PLACE: ELK RIVER, MN

after55.com

Pullman Place is a limited-equity cooperative serving 55+ residents in Elk River, Minnesota. It is a component of a larger transit-oriented development called "Elk River Station." Seniors, who are often on fixed incomes, can benefit from an affordable homeownership option that enables them to easily access services and build relationships while maintaining the independence and financial advantages of ownership.

4.2: GROW INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING TO SUPPORT FAMILIES

One critical asset that can attract families to live in the study area is the quality of local schools. Recent studies have shown that children's future economic prospects can be accurately predicted based on the zip code where they grew up, which has been a primary driver of the fair housing movement nationally. One reason, although not the only reason, for this predictability is the funding for schools, and the quality of schools available in the local area. School quality, according to local developers, is also a key determinant of demand for new housing in any area of Houston.

Sneed Elementary, part of Alief ISD, is the local elementary school that sits within the study area. Sneed serves a diverse population of students, including many English-language learners, which can hamper the school's ratings on the standard Texas Education Agency scoring system. However, Sneed also has strong assets that, with adequate partnerships and funding, could be used to benefit students and distinguish the school's educational offerings from those in other elementary schools in the area.

- Utilizing Sneed's large green space to conduct citizen science and other educational programs could establish the school as an innovator in STEM programming. Westchase District could partner with Sneed to encourage additional studies in green spaces and along trails throughout the study area. Environmental education grants such as Toyota's TAPESTRY grants, the Captain Planet Foundation grants, and Lowe's Foundation grants could help to support this work.
- Technological education using assets like "maker spaces," robotics labs, or computer labs with coding programs can help distinguish schools that help children actively learn useful and creative skills at an early age. Alief ISD already has experience in implementing robotics programs, and Houston Community College also has expressed interest in partnering with local schools to enable programming at their facilities.
- Additional partnership opportunities for Westchase District and Sneed Elementary can be defined through consultation and assessment of available resources to support innovative programming for all students from the study area.

WILDLIFE AND CITIZEN SCIENCE PROGRAM

Texas Parks and Wildlife

TEXAS A&M STEM SUMMER CAMP

Campus Technology

4.3: ADAPT WESTCHASE'S RESIDENTIAL BRAND

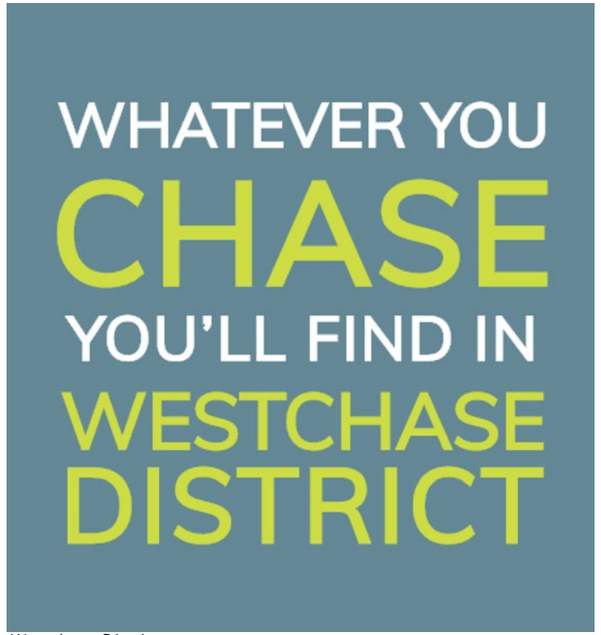
The "Blue Star Certified" signs that currently brand many of the study area's residential complexes focus on a program that was designed to promote screening of tenants in order to prevent crime. However, this brand for the Westchase District's residential complexes can be counterproductive by giving potential residents the feeling of a potentially unsafe area: building a brand around crime prevention may also influence perceptions of the amount of crime in the neighborhood overall. The brand also communicates very little about the character and assets of the community.

Westchase District's communication staff have worked in the last two years to establish a new residential brand that focuses on the positive reasons to choose Westchase District and embrace its inherent qualities. The real estate mantra "location, location, location" speaks to the neighborhood's biggest asset. Westchase District residents are conveniently located in a major employment corridor, surrounded by a wide variety of retail and commercial amenities, and are within minutes of prominent travel arteries. They also have access to a wide variety of local shopping, green space amenities, and local employment opportunities. Replacing existing "Blue Star Certified" signs with signage that focuses on these amenities would be a positive step for Westchase's existing and future residents. The new brand could also work to certify complexes that participate in the District's walkability efforts by installing pedestrian gates, sidewalks, or other pedestrian amenities.

CURRENT BRAND: BLUE STAR CERTIFIED

Asakura Robinson

FUTURE BRAND: WHATEVER YOU CHASE



Westchase District

CONCEPT 5

Advance Community Health and Sustainability

Westchase District is known for its quality landscaping of the public realm and focus on trails and parks. When asked about the chief reasons that Westchase is different from other business districts, participants in the study's Steering Committee agreed that its "green" look and feel was a major reason to choose Westchase as a place to live and work. As the District continues to take action, opportunities include expanding programming opportunities associated with trails and parks, and ensuring that all landscape designs incorporate multi-functional benefits for people and the environment.

The recommendations in this section include:

Recommendation 5.1: Advance Community Health and Sustainability

Recommendation 5.2: Sponsor Active Living Programming for Residents and Employees

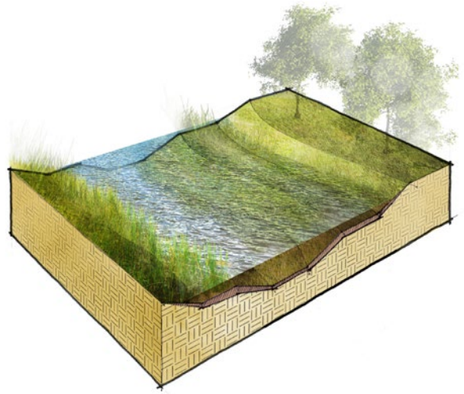
5.1: EXPAND MULTI-FUNCTIONAL GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORKS

By connecting green networks, promoting sustainable development, and building on successful trail development and beautification efforts, a multi-functional green infrastructure network will promote Westchase's status as the "greenest" mixed-use district in Houston. The Westchase District has already done serious thinking about these multifunctional benefits in past projects, such as the butterfly garden installed on the Library Loop Trail. Continuing to add multifunctional landscape improvements in the study area can extend these aesthetic, ecosystem, social, and recreational benefits.

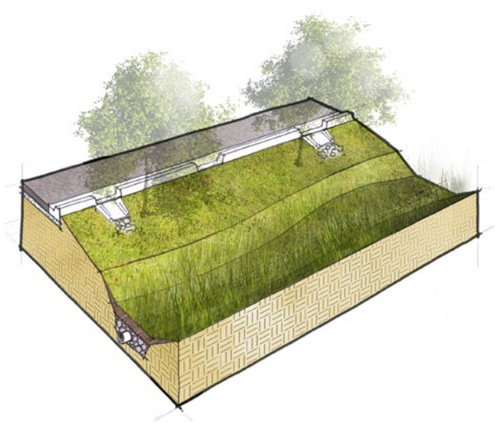
- Sustainable water management with green infrastructure can minimize localized street flooding during heavy rains and improve water quality. These interventions can occur in the public realm, but the District can also encourage developers and property owners to use best practices of low-impact development, and potentially to retrofit existing properties to add tree canopy and low-impact development features through tree planting programs.
- Habitat networks using native plantings can help stabilize local species. Focusing on specific species like birds and butterflies could also provide attractions for visitors and educational opportunities for young residents. Signage along proposed walkable loops could identify the purpose of various native plants and encourage people to observe the natural features around them.
- Through these efforts, the District can create opportunities for the study area to function as a living laboratory. Citizen science programs at schools can further students' STEM education, while local residents and employees could participate in volunteer planting days or plant their own gardens that promote habitat conservation and native species. Nature play or outdoor laboratory facilities at Sneed Elementary could provide space for unstructured design that fosters exploration.

The basic elements for this green infrastructure network are already in place: large setbacks, design expertise at the District, and a willingness to act on innovative designs for the area's corridors and parks. The critical piece is to consider the aesthetic, ecosystem, social, and recreational benefits of each potential project and bring them together into functional networks that help make Westchase green in look, feel, and function.

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT: BIOSWALE



LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT: BIOSWALE



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORKS

UTILIZE WALKABLE LOOPS

HABITAT NETWORKS

SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT

FURTHER STUDENTS' STEM EDUCATION

- 1.1 Current improvements on Elmside/Woodchase
- 1.2 Promenade development begins
- 2.1 Connect Promenade to Briarpark Dr
- 2.2 Richmond connection to Elmside/Woodchase
- 3.1 Westpark Trail enhancements
- 3.2 Connect trails to parks
- 3.3 Utlize setbacks on Briarpark to connect loop
- 4.1 Infill path between properties (may occur sooner)
- 4.2 Extend Promenade east of Gessner
- 5.1 Further STEM education
- 6.1 Build wetlands

5.2: SPONSOR ACTIVE LIVING PROGRAMMING FOR RESIDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

The Quillian Center and the Westchase District's growing network of trails have already begun to brand the District as an area for residents who want an active outdoor lifestyle. As the study area gains new signature green spaces, trails, and walkable zones, growing programming opportunities will provide additional active and healthy living opportunities and continue to establish this competitive branding advantage. Interactive and targeted programming will provide an unique amenity to current residents and encourage daytime employees to spend more time in the study area.

In the 2016 Active Living Plan prepared for the City of Houston, six themes were identified as necessary "...to benefit the general public across all populations, regardless of age or ability." They are Public Health, Culture, Transportation, Built Environment, Parks & Recreation, and Sports & Fitness. The following table describes proposed innovative types of active programming and how these correlate with the six Active Living Themes.

PROGRAMMING	TARGET POPULATION	DESCRIPTION	ACTIVE LIVING THEME
Yoga in the Park	Residential, Employee	Yoga instructors in-training lead free donation-based or low-cost classes	Parks & Recreation, Sports & Fitness
Recreational Sports Leagues	Residential, Employee	Promote Quillian Center activities and consider extending these into new signature park spaces	Sports & Recreation
Evening Bootcamp	Residential, Employee	Focused, group workouts led by a professional trainer	Sports & Recreation
Silent Disco	Residential	Rotating DJs craft themed sets, which attendees can hear on wireless headphones at sunset	Culture

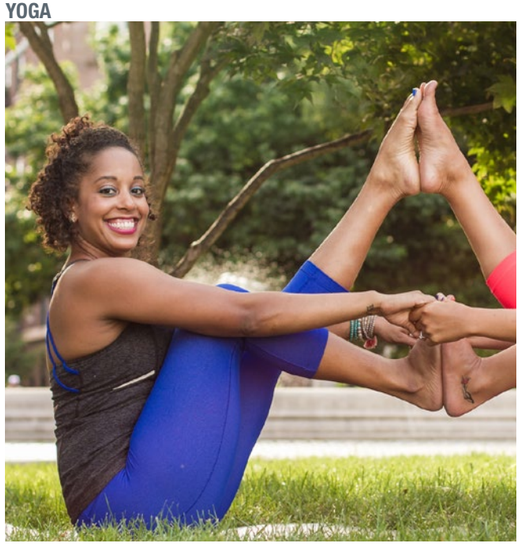
SILENT DISCO

GROUP RIDES

GROUP SPORTS

AEROBICS

YOGA



IMPLEMENTATION

Westchase District is known for actively implementing the results of its planning work. Many of the partner entities who will be involved in implementing this Livable Centers Study were also actively involved in its creation through the Steering Committee and interviews conducted throughout the planning process. This base of support should assist the District in moving these ambitious recommendations forward.

The following chapter includes:

- An Implementation Steps matrix that lists phasing strategies, stakeholders, estimated cost, and funding sources for each of the study's recommendations.
- An Air Quality Impact Assessment that quantifies the improvement in air quality that will result from implementing the study's recommendations, including reductions in NOx and VOC.
- A Health Impact Snapshot that assesses the potential impacts of the study's recommendations on study area residents' and employees' health.

Implementation Steps

CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	PHASING: SHORT-TERM (1-2 YEARS) MEDIUM-TERM (3-5 YEARS) LONG TERM (6-10 YEARS)		STAKEHOLDERS - WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?	ESTIMATED COST (WHERE APPLICABLE)	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
CONCEPT 1: BUILD THE FUTURE WESTCHASE DISTRICT					
Recommendation 1.1: Westheimer Area: Class A, Mixed-Use Development					
1.1A. Create A New Front Yard for Mixed-Use Development: The Promenade	Short Term: Craft public-private partnerships for funding, property access, and development with property owners and interested developers; develop a phasing strategy based on property owner interest and property availability; further design of initial Promenade segment Medium Term: Develop initial segment of Promenade with selected partners Long Term: Complete Promenade development		Westchase District (lead implementer) Property owners with ownership of proposed promenade area Mixed-use developers working in Houston Designers Planners Funding partners and strategists	$10-$15 million depending on treatments, inclusion of green space, etc.	Section 380 funds Local and national grants Private fundraising Corporate sponsorships
1.1B. Develop a Signature Park on the Promenade	Long Term: The signature park(s) will need fundraising, an operations and maintenance strategy, and a coherence with surrounding development proposals that will all be achieved through ongoing conversations with potential property owners and developers. These can be viewed as a later phase of the initial Promenade development.		Westchase District (lead implementer) Property owners Mixed-use developers working in Houston Designers Planners Funding partners and strategists	Approx. $10 - $15 million in capital expenditures per park, dependent on final acreage, programming, and timeframe for completion. Strategy for funding ongoing operations and maintenance at $500,000 - $1 million per year per park must also be considered.	Private fundraising Grants and philanthropic contributions Section 380 funds Potential public-private partnership to eliminate land cost in return for signature park development Event rentals, concessions, and other contributions to fund O&M
1.1C. Advocate for Premier Bus Rapid Transit on Westheimer	Short Term: Organize local residents and businesses around the benefits of bus rapid transit through educational workshops and events to ensure broad-based support for BRT Medium Term: Work with METRO board on design and planning based on METRONext outcomes; ensure strong connections to neighboring job centers and a truly high-quality, rapid transit approach Long Term: Continue to advocate for strong station design and a signature BRT connection facility at the Gessner and Westheimer intersection		METRO (lead implementer) Westchase District Neighborhood residents and advocates City of Houston Additional business districts, Management Districts and TIRZs along the BRT line	No cost to Westchase District for acting as a project advocate, other than dedicated staff time. Potential future cost if WD decides to partner on station improvements.	N/A

CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	PHASING: SHORT-TERM (1-2 YEARS) MEDIUM-TERM (3-5 YEARS) LONG TERM (6-10 YEARS)		STAKEHOLDERS - WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?	ESTIMATED COST (WHERE APPLICABLE)	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Recommendation 1.2: Gessner at Westpark: An Active, Transit-Oriented Hub					
1.2A. Encourage Transit-Oriented Development at the Gessner Park-and-Ride	Short Term: Work with METRO to establish a cooperative endeavor agreement to promote this project; partner on an RFI that includes key information such as parking requirements for METRO, desired types of development Medium Term: Issue RFI to gather information from potential developers; use RFI responses to design and issue RFPs; encourage Joint Development Agreement with developer who provides strongest RFP response Long Term: Completed TOD development and upgraded pedestrian facilities at site		Westchase District (advocate) METRO Developers	$1,500-$3,000 for market study Long-term cost currently unknown; depends on Westchase District role in providing incentives to achieve this redevelopment	Section 380 funds
1.2B. Implement Public Realm and Universal Design Improvements	Short Term: Coordinate with progress of METRO TOD development project; examine opportunity to prioritize Section 5307 funds at this intersection Medium Term: Install universal design improvements Long Term: Setback landscape improvements in partnership with retail property owners		Westchase District (lead implementers) METRO Property owners	$100,000 - $125,000	Section 380 funds Section 5307 funds (METRO)
Recommendation 1.3: Elmside at Meadowglen: Repurpose Aging Retail					
1.3A. Build the Case for a Mixed-Use Redevelopment	Short Term: Commission a market study focused on a mixed-use housing and retail development at the site; contact existing property owner to determine goals for site Medium Term: Work with local property owners invested in the area to identify potential interest in redevelopment; attract interest from potential tenants as well to build the case		Westchase District (advocate) Developers Local property owners	$1,500 for market study	Section 380 funds
1.3B. Improve Walkable Connections to Adjacent Residential Properties	Short Term: Develop cost-sharing program and apply for grants for Connectivity and Walkability Program and Toolkit (Rec. 2.3 in this report); approach neighboring property owners to participate Medium Term: Repair sidewalks and add pedestrian gates to surrounding properties through Toolkit program		Westchase District (lead implementer) Property owners in the Elmside / Meadowglen area	$10,000-$15,000 from Westchase District $10,000-$15,000 from private owners	Grant funding from America Walks Fundraising or sponsorship from local hospitals and health-care organizations

CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	PHASING: SHORT-TERM (1-2 YEARS) MEDIUM-TERM (3-5 YEARS) LONG TERM (6-10 YEARS)		STAKEHOLDERS - WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?	ESTIMATED COST (WHERE APPLICABLE)	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Recommendation 1.4: Southwest Study Area: Connectivity to Stimulate Change					
1.4A. Make Critical Infill Street Connections	Short Term: Work with City to make Hunton - Westoffice connection Long Term: Make opportunistic connections to extend Westchase and Westcenter, and break up the Westchase-Westcenter-Richmond-Westpark superblock, by working with developers during redevelopment processes		Westchase District City of Houston H-GAC	Hunton to Westoffice: Property acquisition: $20,000-$40,000 Construction of new street: 480 feet @ $7.5 million/mile = approx. $681,800 Later streets dependent on redevelopment process and timing	Add to TIP as priority project Section 380 funds H-GAC TAP funds
1.4B. Target Development of Patio Homes and Similar Residential Typologies	Short Term: Meet with property owners of vacant properties to determine plans and timeframes for development; work with developers of patio homes and townhomes to encourage focus in Westchase Medium to Long Term: Continue to monitor properties		Westchase District (advocate)	Not calculated; depends on role of Westchase District in providing any potential incentives to encourage homeownership development	N/A
CONCEPT 2: CREATE A WALKABLE PUBLIC REALM FOR PEOPLE					
Recommendation 2.1. Activate Walkable Loops and Networks with Public Realm Interventions	Short Term: Develop designs for Phase 2; begin construction of Phase 2; finish construction of Phase 1 Medium Term: Finish construction for Phase 2; design and construct Phase 3 Long Term: Develop designs and construct Phase 4 elements		Westchase District (lead implementer)	$1,600,000 for 14,000 linear ft, or $115 per linear foot ***Cost of sub-components:*** Paving = $90,000 or $9.65 per sf. ft. assumes 8"" wide sidewalk and 14,000 linear ft. measured 9333 sq. ft.: Ramps = $25,500 (30 @ $850 per) Painted Crosswalks = $6200 (6 @ $770 each) Street Trees = $245,000 (5 trees every 100 ft. @ $350 each tree) Lighting = $1.2 million ($8,300 per 100 linear sf. ft.) Trash Receptacles = $9,100 ($1,300 each; 2 every 400 linear ft.)	Section 380 funds H-GAC TAP funds

CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	PHASING: SHORT-TERM (1-2 YEARS) MEDIUM-TERM (3-5 YEARS) LONG TERM (6-10 YEARS)		STAKEHOLDERS - WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?	ESTIMATED COST (WHERE APPLICABLE)	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
2.1A. Develop Paths along Property "Seams" - The Lanes at Westchase	Short Term: Include path options to remove fences and incorporate walkable paths between properties in Connectivity and Walkability Toolkit (Rec. 2.3) as well as in newsletters, board meetings, and Westchase Community Association meetings to recruit property owners and managers to participate. Fundraise for first path and create a competitive process to select properties for installation. Medium Term: Implement first path; recruit additional property owners Long Term: Implement additional paths		Westchase District Property owners and managers	$115 per linear foot (see Rec. 2.1 above)	Section 380 funds H-GAC TAP funds Local, state, and federal grants
Recommendation 2.2. Redefine Setbacks to Connect Buildings with the Public Realm	Short Term: Work with Westchase Community Association to redefine setbacks as defined in the full recommendations		Westchase Community Association (lead implementer) Westchase District	No cost - policy change only	N/A
Recommendation 2.3. Create a Connectivity and Walkability Toolkit for Property Owners	Short Term: Use recommendations in document to consider and structure a potential cost-sharing program for small pedestrian-friendly interventions that connect the public and private realms in the study area and District. Seek funding and sponsorship for program from grant and private sector sources. Medium Term: Memorialize program criteria in Toolkit document and share with property owners once funding is secured. Promote use of program through meetings with owners and community presentations. Long Term: Secure additional funding and extend use of program.		Westchase District (lead implementer) Property owners and managers	Toolkit: Small or no cost once partnership cost-sharing program is finalized $2,000 - $10,000 per intervention depending on type and funding provided as match by property owner partners	Local, state, and national grants Philanthropy Corporate sponsorship Private fundraising
Recommendation 2.4. Coordinate with the City to Ensure CIP Projects Advance Walkability	Short Term: Coordinate with City PWE department about projects currently in CIP Medium to Long Term: Continue to coordinate with PWE as CIP is updated		City of Houston (lead implementer) Westchase District TxDOT METRO	No cost - policy change only	N/A

CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	PHASING: SHORT-TERM (1-2 YEARS) MEDIUM-TERM (3-5 YEARS) LONG TERM (6-10 YEARS)		STAKEHOLDERS - WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?	ESTIMATED COST (WHERE APPLICABLE)	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
CONCEPT 3: PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR COMMUTERS, VISITORS, AND RESIDENTS					
Recommendation 3.1. Implement Bicycling Improvements and Encourage End-of-Trip Facilities	Short Term: Develop program to encourage buildings and businesses to implement end-of-trip facilities; identify Ped/Bike Plan projects that can be implemented through roadway re-design, re-striping or signage Medium Term: Work with the City of Houston to implement on-street bicycle facilities		City of Houston and Westchase District (lead implementers) METRO HCTRA HCFCD	$150,000 per mile for restriping $100,000 per mile on-street bicycle facility $6,000 per intersection improvement (depends on treatment)	Section 380 funds Partnerships between local businesses Local grants and philanthropic contributions
3.1A. Connect Pedestrians and Bicyclists to Brays Bayou	Short Term: Begin discussion with neighboring management district (Sharpstown) and regulatory agencies along utility corridor and bayou Medium Term: Work to design and implement off-street shared use facility along corridor; ensure connections to neighborhood bikeways and on-street facilities along route.		Westchase District, Sharpstown Management District, and City of Houston (lead implementers) Center Point HCTRA HCFCD	1,000 ft. on-street bicycle facility @ $100,000 per mile = approx. $18,400 12,000 ft. off-street shared use path @ $1,000,000 per mile = approx. $2,272,700	Section 380 funds Coordination with adjacent management district Local, state, and national grants
3.1B. Connect across Beltway to Library Loop Trail	Short Term: Begin discussion with City of Houston, HCTRA, and TxDOT regarding design and construction of overpass/underpass; possibility of constructing overpass at Meadowglen Medium Term: Work with property owners to acquire necessary ROW and begin design for overpass/ underpass Long Term: Construct overpass/underpass		Westchase District (lead implementer) City of Houston HCTRA TxDOT HCFCD	$6,000,000 - $12,000,000	Section 380 funds Coordination with property owners to sell land on west side of Beltway and develop on open space on east side of Beltway National grants
Recommendation 3.2. Develop a Shared Parking Program	Short Term: Work with the City of Houston to identify an area that has potential for a special parking area; coordinate with adjacent businesses that would benefit from a shared parking program		Westchase District (lead implementer) City of Houston Property owners and businesses	Variable: depends on extent of coordination and formality	Section 380 Partnerships with local businesses
Recommendation 3.3. Examine Opportunities for Additional Park-and-Ride Systems	Short Term: Begin discussion with METRO, Harris County and Fort Bend County to determine the demand for additional bus service to serve Westchase District; educate employers on the benefits of transit service to the District Medium Term: Establish a contracted service (either through METRO or similar to Fort Bend Express) to provide employees an alternative mode of transportation		Westchase District with METRO or private bus service (lead implementers) City of Houston Fort Bend County Harris County	Not calculated	METRO general funding Support from city or special district where located

CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	PHASING: SHORT-TERM (1-2 YEARS) MEDIUM-TERM (3-5 YEARS) LONG TERM (6-10 YEARS)		STAKEHOLDERS - WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?	ESTIMATED COST (WHERE APPLICABLE)	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
CONCEPT 4: DEVELOP HIGH-QUALITY HOUSING FOR ALL RESIDENTS					
Recommendation 4.1. Improve Homeownership Availability and Attraction	Short Term: ***Single Family Homeownership:*** Consult with West 8 and vacant property owners in Southwest study area about development preferences and timeline. Maintain information available on for-sale or potentially available properties for interested developers ***Limited-Equity Co-op:*** Westchase District to coordinate with City of Houston Housing & Community Development. Goal is to invite national experts, such as UHAB or Grounded Solutions Network, to train local TIRZ and Management Districts on the benefits of co-ops as an affordability strategy. Identify a community development corporation who can help move local training and organizing of residents forward.		Developers (lead implementers) Westchase District Local property owners Local residents City of Houston Housing & Community Development	Possible future costs of public realm or infrastructure interventions to help incentivize development; project-dependent	Section 380 funds Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation loans for predevelopment and development of limited-equity co-ops National grants CDBG and other housing-related City of Houston funds for limited-equity co-ops
Recommendation 4.2. Support a Multi-Generational Community	Short Term: Host meetings between District and Sneed Elementary / Alief ISD staff to determine opportunities to further recommendations in the report Medium Term: Secure grants for improvements that provide citizen science, active play, robotics, coding, or other STEM offerings at Sneed		Sneed Elementary (lead implementer) Westchase District (key partner, assistance with fundraising) Houston Community College	Uncertain at this point; depends on areas where Sneed Elementary hopes to partner	Grants for environmental and STEM education Houston Community College in-kind partnership Private fundraising Corporate partnerships
Recommendation 4.3. Adapt Westchase's Residential Brand	Short Term: Design signage based on new brand; distribute to property owners (possibly dependent on whether they participate in initiatives like the Connectivity & Walkability Toolkit Program)		Westchase District (lead implementer) Residential property owners	$30,000 - $50,000	Westchase District Section 380 or other funds

CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	PHASING: SHORT-TERM (1-2 YEARS) MEDIUM-TERM (3-5 YEARS) LONG TERM (6-10 YEARS)		STAKEHOLDERS - WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?	ESTIMATED COST (WHERE APPLICABLE)	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
CONCEPT 5: ADVANCE COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY					
Recommendation 5.1. Expand Multi-Functional Green Infrastructure Networks	Short Term: Build a property-owner oriented program to encourage low-impact development and interventions within existing setbacks, parking lots, and other passive green spaces or impervious surfaces; incorporate green infrastructure standards in all walkable loop developments and paths Medium Term: Establish a low-impact development program to encourage green infrastructure incorporation in new developments; continue to incorporate in public realm projects Long Term: Collaborative project with Sneed Elementary		Westchase District (lead implementer) Westchase Community Association Property owners Developers Sneed Elementary	Dependent on whether LID can become a requirement in WCA covenants or whether the District must provide incentives to encourage LID Collaborative project with Sneed Elementary: dependent on nature of project and design	Section 380 funds Local and national grants Corporate sponsorships
Recommendation 5.2. Sponsor Active Living Programming for Residents and Employees	Short Term: Partner with Quillian Center to offer innovative programming options on-site; on local trails; and at local apartment complexes and office properties Medium to Long Term: Offer programs on the Promenade, on walkable loops, and at new signature parks; develop podcast suggestions for walkable loops		Quillian Center (lead implementer) Westchase District Private-sector fitness companies	Dependent on programming; from free to $50,000 per year	Corporate sponsorships Private fundraising

IMPLEMENTATION

Air Quality Impact Assessment

PREMISE

Several of the concept recommendations focus on providing attractive, functional sidewalks and greenspace opportunities in areas where they are most needed, as well as providing an enhanced level of transit through the study area. The improvement in the pedestrian environment will make walking and bicycling more attractive. It will also increase the use and attractiveness of transit as a travel mode. We anticipate that the concept recommendations will have a net result of a modest decrease in automobile trips, vehicle miles traveled, and associated vehicle emissions.

STATEMENT OF BENEFITS

KEY DATA/ASSUMPTIONS

- 259,877 person trips in Traffic Analysis Zones (see Table 1)
- 1.50 average vehicle occupancy (person trips per vehicle trip)
- 0.9% reduction in vehicle trips due to projects
- 10.32 miles per vehicle trip

RESULTS

- NOx reduced: **42.32 kg/day**
- VOC reduced: **8.21 kg/day**

Table 1. TAZs included in Westchase Study Area

773	***777***	***824***
774	***778***	***1682***
775	***779***	***1685***
776	***823***	***1686***

CALCULATIONS

There are very few studies on whether improvements to the built environment (e.g. land use patterns, roadway design characteristics, and pedestrian facilities) have effects on air quality and access to transit. "An Assessment of Urban Form and Pedestrian and Transit Improvements as an Integrated GHG Reduction Strategy" was one such research project conducted to test the effect of sidewalks on travel patterns and its relation to VMT and GHG emissions. Available at *wsdot.wa.gov/research/reports/fullreports/765.1.pdf*. A predictive spreadsheet tool was developed to assess VMT and CO_2 outcomes of different development scenarios. This study resulted in much larger reductions in VMT and CO_2 when quality transit service was provided as well as assuming a complete sidewalk coverage.

There has been significant research on how increased urban green space has a positive increase on air quality and overall health of the community. According to one study, "The Impact of Green Space on Heat and Air Pollution in Urban Communities: A Meta-Narrative Systematic Review", the size, quality and density and interconnectedness of green space can provide significant health benefits for residents and the community.

Available at *davidsuzuki.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/impact-green-space-heat-air-pollution-urban-communities.pdf*.

The proposed improvements recommended in the conceptual plan will increase sidewalk connectivity, access to greenspace and access to transit facilities in the Westchase study area. The number of automobile trips generated by the Traffic Analysis Zones which cover the study area is estimated at 173,251 per day based on 259,877 person trips/day divided by the national vehicle occupancy of 1.50. The average vehicle trip distance of 10.32 miles for the Westchase area is calculated using regional trip characteristics by vehicle occupancy for the TAZs in the study area.

Sources: Change in Vehicle Occupancy Used in Mobility Monitoring Efforts, Texas A&M Transportation Institute (*static.tti.tamu.edu/tti.tamu.edu/documents/TTI-2017-9.pdf*) and the 2009 National Household Travel Survey (*nhts.ornl.gov/tables09/fatcat/2009/avo_TRPTRANS_WHYTRP1S.html*).

VMT reduction is calculated to be 16,092 miles per day based on multiplication of the average trip distance (10.32), number of vehicle trips in the zone (173,521) and the percentage of trips reduced by the project (0.9%).

- 10.32 x 173,521 = 1,787,954
- 1,787,954 x 0.009 = 16,092 mi/day

As shown in Table 2, vehicle emissions are calculated by multiplying VMT by the weighted average emission rates by vehicle type.

Table 2. Vehicle Mix and Average Emission Rates by EPA Vehicle Type

Fuel Type	Vehicle Type	NOx (g/mile)	VOC (g/mile)
Gasoline	Motorcycle	0.41	0.75
	Passenger Car	0.12	0.03
	Passenger Truck	0.33	0.11
	Light Commercial Truck	0.41	0.10
	Intercity Bus	2.79	1.86
	Refuse Truck	4.81	2.03
	Single Unit Short Haul Truck	0.46	0.20
	Single Unit Long Haul Truck	0.42	0.18
	Motorhome	1.89	0.95
	Combination Short Haul Truck	1.33	0.65
Diesel	Passenger Car	0.09	0.02
	Passenger Truck	1.52	0.25
	Light Commercial Truck	1.55	0.29
	Intercity Bus	9.17	0.64
	Transit Bus	5.02	0.48
	School Bus	3.90	0.68
	Refuse Truck	5.70	0.34
	Single Unit Short Haul Truck	1.71	0.19
	Single Unit Long Haul Truck	1.57	0.17
	Motorhome	4.02	0.66
	Combination Short Haul Truck	4.64	0.27
	Combination Long Haul Truck	6.09	0.33
All Vehicles		2.63	0.51

VOC= 16,092 mi/day * 0.51 g/mi = 8,206.9 g/day = 8.21 kg/day

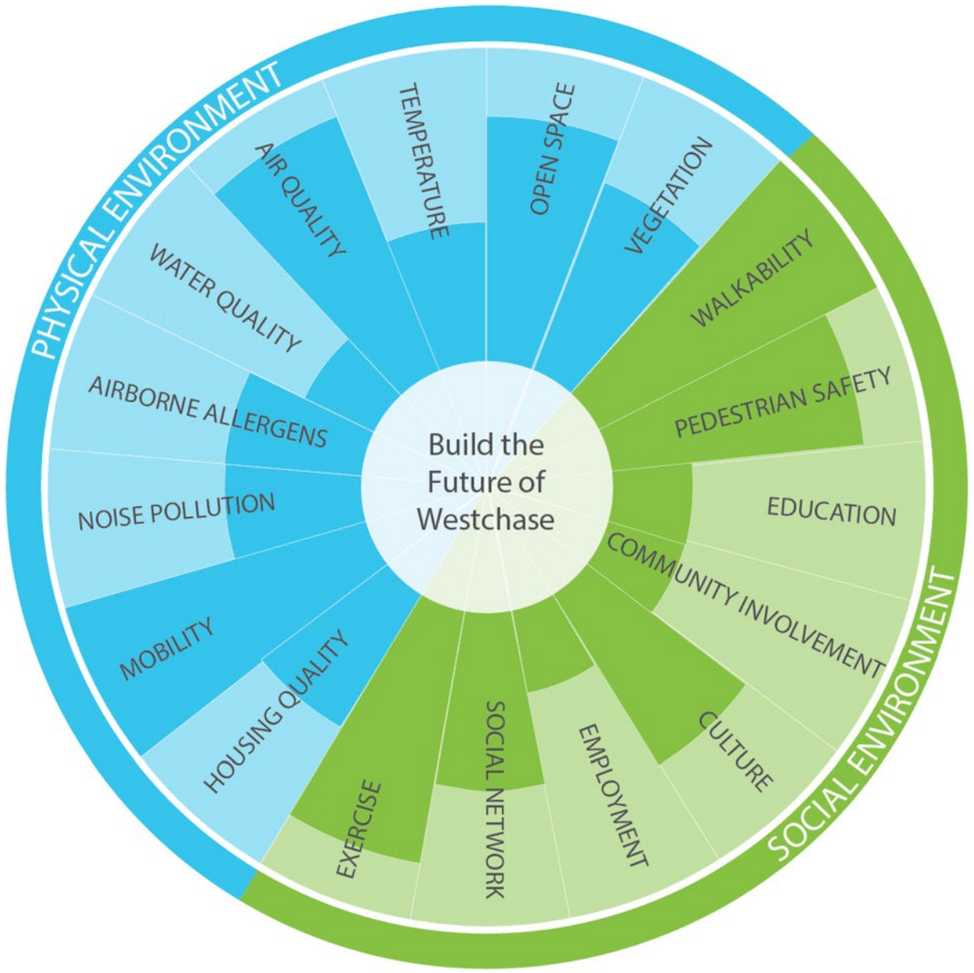
NOx = 16,092 mi/day * 2.63 g/mi = 42,321.96 g/day = 42.32 kg/day

IMPLEMENTATION

Health Impact Snapshot

The recommendations in this report will assist in improving residents' and employees' health by encouraging active living; helping grow residents' social networks; improving air quality in the study area; and increasing safe mobility for residents by reducing the incidence of traffic crashes. The following Health Impact Snapshot evaluates each recommendation's potential health impacts.

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



HEALTH IMPACTS

The top five health determinants most impacted by Concept One include mobility, walkability, exercise, pedestrian safety, and air quality. Concept One recommendations include items such as the creation of mixed-use development, promotion of bus rapid transit, the development of transit-oriented development, improvement of walkable connections, and making critical infill street connections will all impact the walkability and mobility of Westchase District, thereby creating opportunities to both minimize air pollution and its negative health impacts with an associated reduction in the number of cars on the road. Coupled with thoughtful pedestrian-centered design, pedestrian safety will increase as a result of plan implementation, thereby further promoting walkability.

	PHYSICAL DETERMINANT OF HEALTH									SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL DETERMINANT OF HEALTH							
	VEGETATION	OPEN SPACE	TEMPERATURE	AIR QUALITY	WATER QUALITY	AIRBORNE ALLERGENS	NOISE POLLUTION	MOBILITY	HOUSING QUALITY	EXERCISE	SOCIAL NETWORK	EMPLOYMENT	CULTURE	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	EDUCATION	PEDESTRIAN SAFETY	WALKABILITY
REC 1.1 WESTHEIMER																	
1.1A. Create A New Front Yard for Mixed-Use Development: The Promenade	x	x						x		x	x		x			x	x
1.1B. Develop a Signature Park on the Promenade	x	x	x	x						x	x		x				
1.1C. Advocate for Premier Bus Rapid Transit on Westheimer				x		x	x	x									
REC. 1.2 WESTPARK & GESSNER																	
1.2A. Encourage TOD Development at the Gessner Park-and-Ride				x				x									x
1.2B. Implement Public Realm and Universal Design Improvements																	
REC 1.3 ELMSIDE & MEADOWGLEN																	
1.3A. Build the Case for a Mixed-Use Redevelopment									x		x					x	x
1.3B. Improve Walkable Connections to Adjacent Residential Properties	x	x	x	x				x		x	x					x	x
REC 1.4 SOUTHWEST STUDY AREA																	
1.4A. Make Critical Infill Street Connections								x								x	x
1.4B. Target Right-Sized Properties for Residential Redevelopment																	

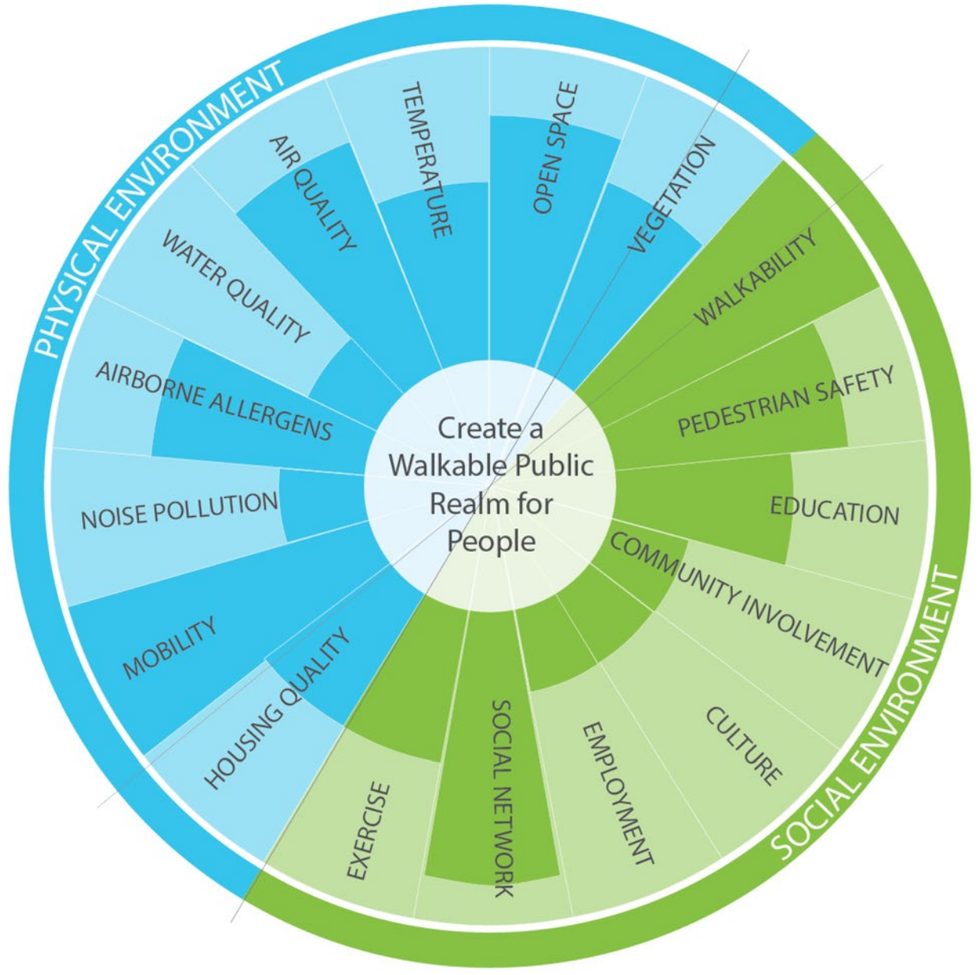
Additionally, increased walkability and mobility are both directly correlated with an increase in exercise. As exercise increases, many studies suggest that Westchase will see a number of positive benefits for both the mental and physical health of its residents. In unison, these principles have exponentially more impact than any goal below has individually for people living in Westchase.

Concept One will have the least impact on education, water quality, housing quality, employment, and temperature though other concepts focus more on recommendations that directly benefit some of those determinants of health. However, it is important to note that an increase in density associated with the promotion of transit-oriented development and mixed-use development; as well as an increase in pavement to promote street connections could result in an increase in local temperatures in Westchase due to an increase in thermal mass as well as reduced water quality and potential for a negative impact on localized flooding. However, with the appropriate green infrastructure measures to both mitigate localized heat island concerns and water quality and quantity concerns, concept one should be able to remain neutral in these areas of concern (see Concept Five). Temperature could have an impact on physical health of Westchase residents. Heat stress has been shown to impact the elderly at much higher rates than other groups. Implementation of the plan should ensure measures are taken to reduce heat, and thereby reduce heat stress in residents.thereby further promoting walkability.

CONCEPT 2

HEALTH IMPACTS

The top six health determinants most impacted by Concept Two include mobility, walkability, social networks, pedestrian safety, open space, and air quality. Concept Two recommendations include items such as the creation of active walkable loops and networks, pedestrian pathways, as well as an evolution of the public realm to better activate public spaces for pedestrians and passive use. As networks of pedestrian walkways connect to promote mobility and walkability, the activation of the public realm that intersects with those networks, including opportunities to create small pocket parks and other urban green spaces, has been shown to promote social networks. The creation of informal or casual social spaces has been shown to have significant mental health benefits. This coupled with an increase in mobility and walkability, and thereby exercise, culminates in multiple potential physical and mental health benefits for the residents of Westchase as a result of the implementation of Concept Two recommendations. As was true for Concept One, Concept Two will create opportunities to both minimize air pollution and its negative health impacts with an associated reduction in the number of cars on the road. Additionally,



public realm improvements should look for opportunities to integrate trees and plantings that can further mitigate air pollution, thereby reducing health impacts of air quality issues.

Concept Two will have the least impact on employment, noise pollution, community involvement, housing quality, and water quality though other concepts focus more on recommendations that directly benefit some of those determinants of health. However, no negative health impacts can be foreseen for any of these factors.

	PHYSICAL DETERMINANT OF HEALTH									SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL DETERMINANT OF HEALTH							
	VEGETATION	OPEN SPACE	TEMPERATURE	AIR QUALITY	WATER QUALITY	AIRBORNE ALLERGENS	NOISE POLLUTION	MOBILITY	HOUSING QUALITY	EXERCISE	SOCIAL NETWORK	EMPLOYMENT	CULTURE	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	EDUCATION	PEDESTRIAN SAFETY	WALKABILITY
REC 2.1 WALKABLE LOOPS																	
2.1. Activate Walkable Loops and Networks with Public Realm Interventions	x	x	x	x		x		x		x	x				x	x	x
2.1A. Develop Paths along Property "Seams" - The Lanes at Westchase	x	x	x	x		x		x			x					x	x
REC. 2.1A SETBACKS																	
2.2. Redefine Setbacks to Connect Buildings with the Public Realm		x						x			x						x
REC 2.3 TOOL KIT																	
2.3. Create a Connectivity and Walkability Toolkit for Property Owners								x	x								x
REC 2.4 CIP PROJECTS																	
2.4. Coordinate with the City to Ensure CIP Projects Advance Walkability								x									x

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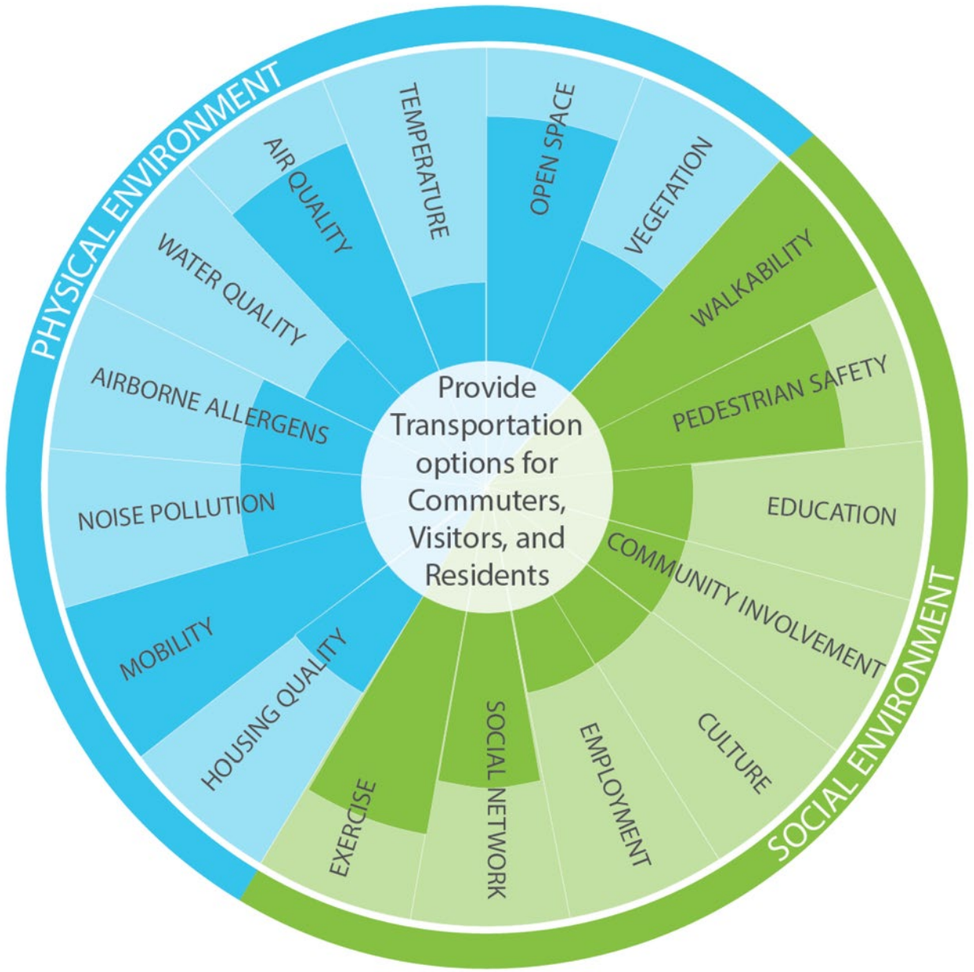
CONCEPT 3

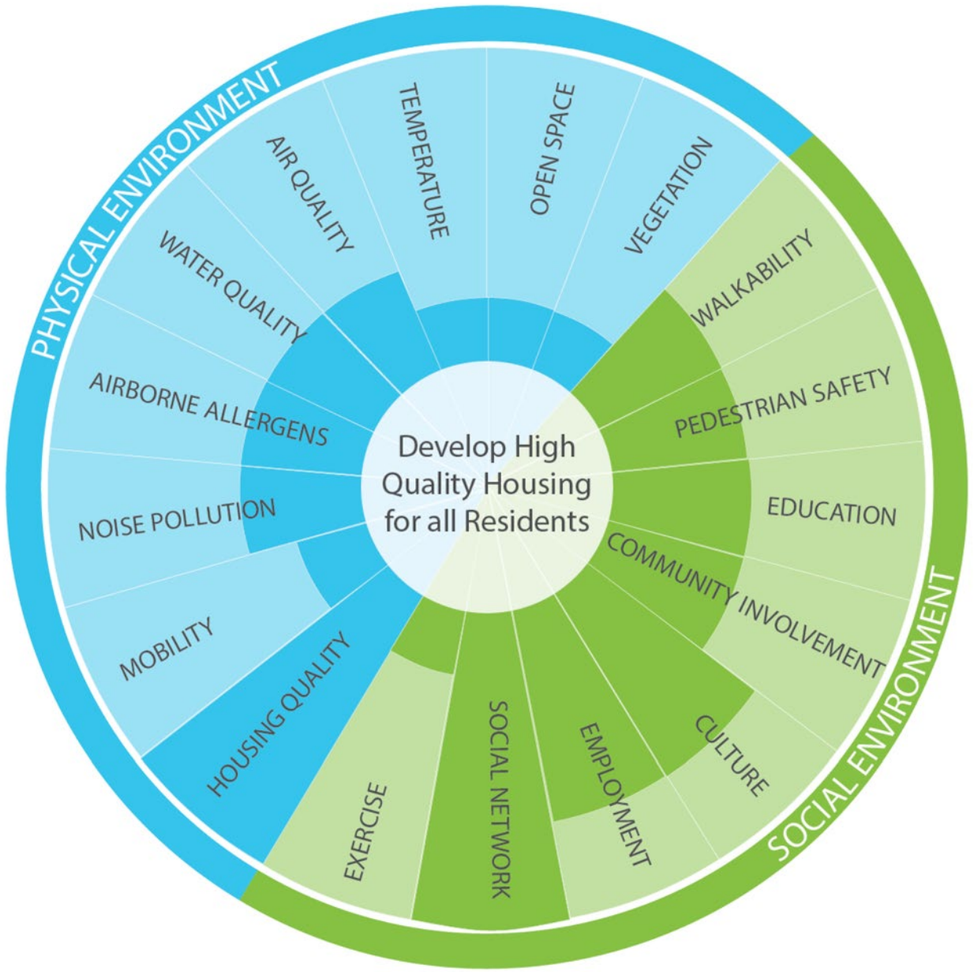


	PHYSICAL DETERMINANT OF HEALTH									SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL DETERMINANT OF HEALTH							
	VEGETATION	OPEN SPACE	TEMPERATURE	AIR QUALITY	WATER QUALITY	AIRBORNE ALLERGENS	NOISE POLLUTION	MOBILITY	HOUSING QUALITY	EXERCISE	SOCIAL NETWORK	EMPLOYMENT	CULTURE	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	EDUCATION	PEDESTRIAN SAFETY	WALKABILITY
REC 3 BICYCLING																	
3.1. Implement Bicycling Improvements and Encourage End-of-Trip Facilities								x								x	x
3.1A. Connect Pedestrians and Bicyclists to Brays Bayou	x	x		x				x		x	x					x	x
3.1B. Connect across Beltway to Library Loop Trail	x	x		x		x	x	x		x	x					x	x
REC 3.2 PARKING																	
3.2. Develop a Shared Parking Program		x						x		x							x
REC 3.3 PARK-AND-RIDE																	
3.3. Examine Opportunities for Additional Park-and-Ride Systems								x									

HEALTH IMPACTS

The top six health determinants most impacted by Concept Three include mobility, walkability, exercise, pedestrian safety, open space, and air quality. Benefits are very similar to Concept Two because of the similar focus on mobility and walkability however, Concept Three is specifically oriented toward active opportunities for both recreation and commuting, as well as the broadening of local and regional transportation options. Concept Three recommendations include items such as the implementation of bicycle improvements, the connection of both bicyclists and pedestrians to Bray's Bayou, the creation of key trail connections such as across the Beltway to Library Loop Trail, the development of shared parking, and the further study of opportunities for park-and-ride. Westchase should see some air quality benefits with an associated reduction in vehicle miles traveled. The increase in access to trails for more active recreation as compared to more passive options in Concept Two will yield further improved exercise opportunities and result in physical and mental health benefits for residents and visitors. Opportunities for residents to alter their commute via improved bicycle connections could have a significant impact on both mental and physical health, whereas shared parking and park and ride opportunities should marginally increase the amount of walking residents engage in and result in some mental and physical health benefits.

Concept Three will have the least impact on temperature, water quality, housing quality, employment, and education though other concepts focus more on recommendations that directly benefit some of those determinants of health. Sustainable trail design strategies should be employed to minimize negative impacts to water quality. Trail design standards should consider how to integrate trees and other vegetation as standard practice to minimize heat stress of users.



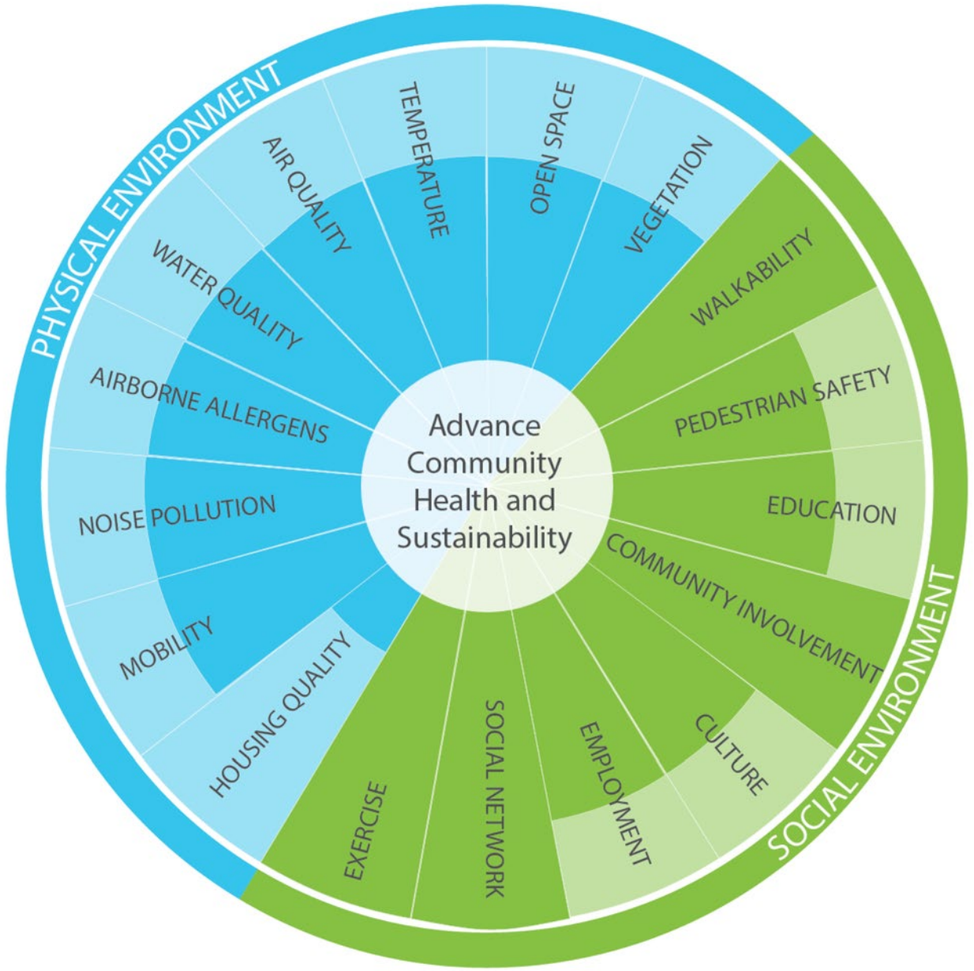
HEALTH IMPACTS

The top four health determinants most impacted by Concept Four include housing quality, social network, employment, and culture. Concept Four recommendations include items such as improving homeownership availability and attraction, supporting a multi-generational community, and adaptation of Westchase's Residential Brand. Stability in either rental residence or homeownership has been shown to have clear mental and sometimes physical health benefits. Multi-generational communities have been shown to both support diverse employment opportunities but also diversity in culture and an increase in opportunities to engage in social networks – all of which have potential benefits to mental health.

	PHYSICAL DETERMINANT OF HEALTH									SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL DETERMINANT OF HEALTH							
	VEGETATION	OPEN SPACE	TEMPERATURE	AIR QUALITY	WATER QUALITY	AIRBORNE ALLERGENS	NOISE POLLUTION	MOBILITY	HOUSING QUALITY	EXERCISE	SOCIAL NETWORK	EMPLOYMENT	CULTURE	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	EDUCATION	PEDESTRIAN SAFETY	WALKABILITY
REC 4.1 HOMEOWNER																	
4.1. Improve Homeownership Availability and Attraction									x		x	x	x		x	x	x
REC 4.2 COMMUNITY																	
4.2. Support a Multi-Generational Community				x	x	x			x		x	x	x	x			x
REC 4.3 BRAND																	
4.3. Adapt Westchase's Residential Brand									x		x						

Concept Four will have the least impact on mobility, temperature, open space, vegetation, and exercise though other concepts focus more on recommendations that directly benefit some of those determinants of health. Much like Concept One, it is important to note that an increase in structures or density associated with the promotion of multi-generational communities and homeownership could result in an increase in local temperatures in Westchase due to an increase in thermal mass as well as reduced water quality and potential for a negative impact on localized flooding if this Concept is coupled with an increase in impervious cover.

Additionally, if homeownership promotion results in a desire for less dense, single-family communities, this could also impact the water quality and localized flood impacts after implementation. However, with the appropriate green infrastructure measures to both mitigate any localized heat island concerns and water quality and quantity concerns, Concept Four should be able to remain neutral in these areas of concern.



	PHYSICAL DETERMINANT OF HEALTH									SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL DETERMINANT OF HEALTH							
	VEGETATION	OPEN SPACE	TEMPERATURE	AIR QUALITY	WATER QUALITY	AIRBORNE ALLERGENS	NOISE POLLUTION	MOBILITY	HOUSING QUALITY	EXERCISE	SOCIAL NETWORK	EMPLOYMENT	CULTURE	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	EDUCATION	PEDESTRIAN SAFETY	WALKABILITY
REC 5.1 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE																	
5.1. Continue to Implement a Multi-Functional Green Infrastructure Network	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X	X	X
REC 5.2 ACTIVE LIVING																	
5.2. Sponsor Active Living Programming for Residents and Employees										X	X		X	X			X

HEALTH IMPACTS

The top four health determinants most impacted by Concept Five include walkability, exercise, social network, and community involvement. However, secondarily, almost every determinant other than housing quality will see an intermediate to high benefit with implementation of Concept Five recommendations. Concept Five recommendations include continuing to implement a multi-functional green infrastructure network and the sponsorship of active living programming for residents and employees. Each of these recommendations will result in substantial mental and physical health benefits, either directly through the active living programming, or indirectly through positive environmental benefits of the green infrastructure network. In concert, Concept Five's recommendations would result in walkability, exercise, and social network benefits with both an increase in green space interactions for residents and opportunities for active living within Westchase's green spaces and pedestrian and bicycle networks. Environmental risks related to air quality, temperature, and noise pollution can be intentionally mitigated through thoughtfully resilient design standards for new and improved green infrastructure networks. These improvements to environmental health determinants will result in both mental and physical health benefits for both residents and visitors.

Concept Five will have the least impact on housing quality though Concept Four focus more on recommendations that directly benefit housing as a determinant of health. Special attention should be given to green infrastructure strategies that minimize the introduction of vegetation that specifically promotes the production of certain widely problematic airborne allergens.

APPENDIX A: PLAN REVIEW

One of the study team's goals in conducting this Livable Centers Study was to build upon – not repeat – the conclusions of previous planning work. This plan review summarizes recent planning work for the Westchase District, City of Houston, H-GAC, and other relevant entities that relates to the study area. The study team utilized this review in advancing new, yet related, recommendations and prioritizing projects to achieve Livable Centers objectives.

Plan	Page Number
Our Great Region 2040	182
Plan Houston	185
Urban Houston Framework	186
Bayou Greenways 2020	188
City of Houston Parks Master Plan	189
Houston Bike Plan	190
Houston Code of Ordinance Chapter 42	191
Houston Code of Ordinance Chapter 26	192
METRO's System Reimagined	194
City of Houston Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan	195
Greater West Houston Mobility Plan	196
Westchase Long-Range Plan	198
Westchase 380 Agreement	200
Protective Covenants for Westchase Subdivision Section One	201
Westchase Mobility Plan	203
Westchase Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan	205
Westchase Streetscapes Plan	206
Westchase Trails and Parks Master Plan	207
Meadowglen Lane Corridor Study Mater Plan	208
Walnut Bend Lane Corridor Study Mater Plan	209

Plans to be reviewed by June 1 and responsible team members are above. Each plan should be summarized in a table format, following the template.

PLAN REVIEW

TITLE: **Our Great Region 2040**

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): **HGAC**

DATE: **Ongoing**

PROJECT SUMMARY: The area's regional plan identifies urban, suburban, rural and coastal communities as those pertaining to the greater region with different needs and priorities. 15 goals organized around the framework of People, Places, and Prosperity. These aspirational goals are followed by strategies for different sectors of planning and development.

SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS THAT APPLY TO WESTCHASE LC STUDY AREA:

People
Residents have access to education and training opportunities to allow them to realize their full potential
Residents live in safe, healthy communities with transportation options, including walking, biking transit, and driving
Our Region enjoys clean and plentiful water, air, soil, and food resources to sustain healthy future generations
Residents are physically and mentally healthy and are able to lead healthy lifestyles
Our Region provides choices for individuals and for local communities to fulfill their needs

Places
Our Region coordinates infrastructure, housing, and transportation investments, creating areas of opportunity and enhancing existing neighborhoods
Our Region values and preserves its unique ecosystems, working landscapes, parks, and open spaces, and the ecological benefits they provide
Communities have a range of quality housing choices that meet the diverse needs and preferences of all residents
Our Region efficiently uses, reuses, and conserves its natural resources by managing waste
Communities are strengthened by strong social ties, local gathering places, and residents who participate in social, civic, service, and faith organizations

Prosperity
Our Region has a diverse economy and skilled workforce that support businesses, innovation, and entrepreneurship
Residents have access to job opportunities that support a good quality of life and financial stability
Transportation infrastructure promotes effective goods movement and is well-connected to other global destinations
Our Region embraces its rich multicultural, historical, and natural assets to ensure our communities retain their unique character
Our Region is resilient and adaptive to economic downturns and environmental or natural disasters

Economic Development: Maintain a competitive economy, support thriving businesses, and develop a prepared workforce

- Improve the opportunities for lifelong learning by scaling up and coordinating efforts, from quality early childhood education to GED and community education programs to skills training for seniors.
- Expand programs to improve job and financial skills and promote self sufficiency.
- Increase availability of information on job skills needed by employers to educational institutions, allowing them to better tailor their course and training offerings.
- Promote business attraction and retention efforts through multi-jurisdictional coordination and financial incentives.
- Increase availability of high speed data connections and broadband Internet across the region, especially in rural areas.
- Institute a "buy local, make local, grow local" campaign to support local businesses.

ENVIRONMENT: **Work together on long term structural solutions to increase water storage and distribution capacity.**

- Create watershed protection plans to protect recharge zones and water sources, as well as waterways and wetland buffer areas.
- Establish alliances to coordinate water conservation and protection efforts across Our Region, including sharing data and best practices, developing financial incentives, and implementing public awareness programs.
- Increase awareness of the economic benefits of environmental systems.
- Conserve natural assets through multi-benefit green infrastructure projects and designing with nature, such as Low Impact Development and expanding Our Region's network of open space and trails along waterways.
- Develop a regional plan to conserve high quality natural areas.
- Promote efficient resource management, including energy, solid waste, and water

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES: **Promote healthy lifestyles, increase access to healthy foods, and improve access to care.**

- Establish regional infrastructure and distribution mechanisms to support farmers markets, local agriculture, and other means to provide fresh, healthy food to residents across Our Region.
- Increase current funding and identify innovative funding sources to develop and maintain sidewalks, bikeways, bikeshare infrastructure, and parks/open space that promote more active lifestyles.
- Create a regional task force that works across multiple disciplines (health departments, public safety) to address mental health issues.
- Foster neighborhoods that put an emphasis on health, incorporating elements that promote active living, social interaction, and healthy eating, and allow for aging in place.
- Identify and promote existing and emerging community resources for mental health services.
- Expand availability of community health services and trauma care, particularly in low-income and rural areas.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Support a thriving housing market, provide housing choices to meet diverse needs, and provide quality housing that is both safe and healthy

- Develop local housing plans to accommodate future growth.
- Provide financial incentives, such as tax foreclosure property programs or property lien dismissals, for developers to build diverse housing types near jobs, transit centers, and services, including mixed-use developments and housing at a variety of price points.
- Develop incentives and a toolkit for matching and maintaining local housing stock to meet economic development needs, bringing greater access to opportunities.
- Identify gaps and opportunities in the quality and supply of the regional housing stock, including housing for seniors or aging in place.
- Develop and enforce local housing codes and standards to ensure owner-occupied and rental housing is safe and healthy.

TRANSPORTATION: **Maintain an efficient network, increase transportation choices, and improve planning and coordination.**

- Improve the efficiency of freight movement by investing in projects that improve connections between ships, trains, and trucks.
- Optimize existing transportation network through a 'Fix it First' strategy and by using technology and improved incident management to maximize system capacity.
- Create a regional framework for expanding transit across Our Region.
- Develop and implement policies to improve transit, pedestrian, and bicycle access between and within activity centers, connecting residents to job centers.
- Provide counties with tools to better coordinate land use and transportation planning in unincorporated areas.
- Include economic, safety, quality of life, and environmental costs and benefits of transportation projects in funding prioritizations.

RESILIENCY: **Prepare for future disaster and storm events, adapt to changing conditions, and recover when events do occur.**

- Develop an integrated regional storm defense system, which includes both structural and non-structural elements.
- Develop a rapid recovery plan to help people and businesses return as quickly as possible.
- Enhance coordination of evacuation planning and preparation efforts, particularly to address the needs of vulnerable populations.
- Improve regional air quality and reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions by offering alternative modes of transportation, improving energy efficiency, and effectively managing resources.
- Support innovative adaptation strategies that help communities prepare for potential environmental changes, such as severe weather events and sea level rise.

TITLE: **Plan Houston**

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): **City of Houston**

DATE: **September 2015**

PROJECT SUMMARY: The city's first general plan describes a vision and goals for the community. The vision and goals are supported through twelve core strategies each with actions that represent the city's approach to achieving this vision. The vision, goals and core strategies were identified by stakeholders and a public engagement process that yielded over 6,000 responses from members in the community.

VISION: Houston offers opportunity for all and celebrates its diversity of people, economy, culture, and places. Houston promotes healthy and resilient communities through smart civic investments, dynamic partnerships, education, and innovation. Houston is the place where anyone can prosper and feel at home.

THIRTY-TWO GOALS IN NINE CATEGORIES:

1. People
2. Place
3. Culture
4. Education
5. Economy
6. Environment
7. Public Services
8. Transportation
9. Housing

THE TWELVE CORE STRATEGIES ARE:

1. Spend money wisely
2. Grow responsibly
3. Nurture safe and healthy neighborhoods
4. Connect people and places
5. Support a global economy
6. Sustain quality infrastructure
7. Champion learning
8. Foster an affordable city
9. Protect and conserve our resources
10. Communicate clearly and with transparency
11. Partner with others, public and private

TITLE: **Urban Houston Framework**

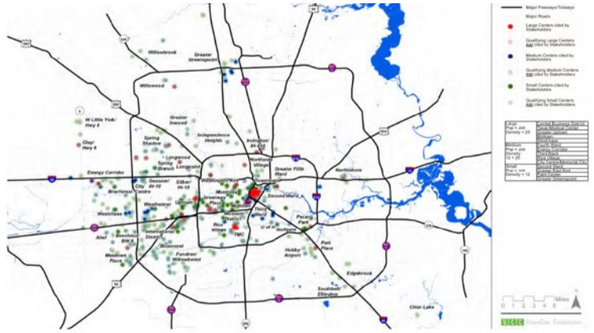
AGENCY SPONSOR(S): **HGAC**

DATE: **May 2013**

PROJECT SUMMARY: The plan outlines a framework (toolbox) to help integrate land use and transportation planning by coordinating land development standards with new transit investments and providing affordable housing in dense areas around new transit lines. The plan defines an "urban center" as a space where individuals can congregate providing for maximum use of existing city and regional resources. Plan breaks down "Centers" into large, medium and small categories.

Urban Centers (at a minimum) should aim to achieve (based on livability principles of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development):

1. Address local and regional housing needs
2. Contribute to high- quality infrastructure
3. Encourage economic viability and diversity
4. Enhance community stability, accessibility and equity
5. Promote sustainable, healthy design
6. Support multimodal transportation and increased nectivity



SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS THAT APPLY TO WESTCHASE LC STUDY AREA:

Category	Summary	Cost	Funding Sources	Progress (Planned, Proposed In Progress, Completed)
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	All Centers: light rail, express bus, local bus	$$$	*	Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	All Centers: hierarchy of bike/ped infrastructure	$$	*	Proposed
Housing	Large Center: high-rise multi family residential units to mid-rise residential	Proposed policies and programs	Section 811 HUD	Proposed
Housing	Medium: mid-rise multi family residential units to townhouses; variety of prices	Proposed policies and programs	Section 811 HUD	Proposed
Housing	Small: range mid rise multi family, caretaker and accessory units; variety of prices	Proposed policies and programs	Section 811 HUD	Proposed
Urban Design	Large: direct access to freeways, thoroughfares	$$$	*	Proposed
Urban Design	Medium: access to thoroughfares and collectors to small center	$$$	*	Proposed
Urban Design	Small: small block size, well connected street network	$$$	*	Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Roadway Projects- Meadowglen across Beltway 8	$$$	*	Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Roadway Projects- Westpark Drive from Gessner Rd. to Highway 6	$$$	*	Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Roadway Projects- Town Park Drive cross Beltway 8 and utility ROW	$$$	*	Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Intersection Improvements- Westheimer @ Wilcrest	$$	*	Proposed

* Tax Abatement Ordinance, Chapter 380 of the State of Texas Local Government Code, Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone, (TIRZ), Private Activity Bonds and Mortgage, Revenue Bond Program, Developer Participation Contract (70-30 DPCs)

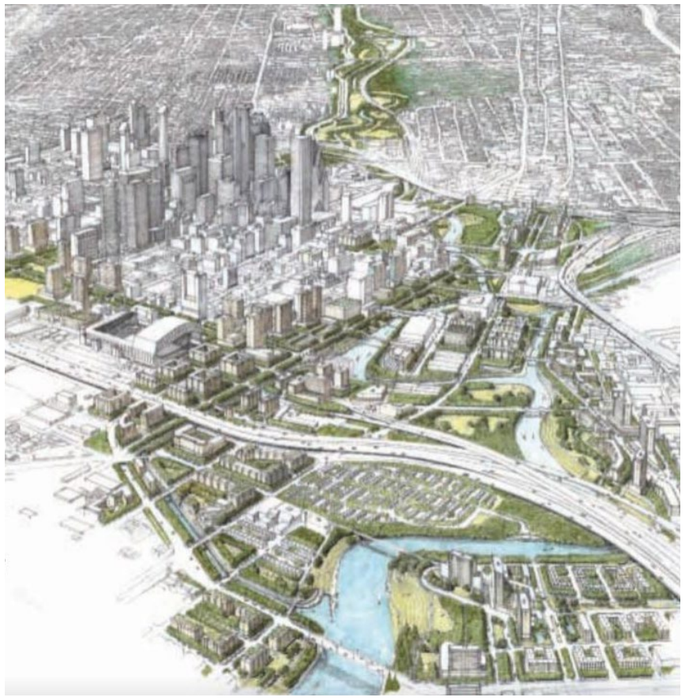
TITLE: **Bayou Greenways 2020**

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): **Houston Parks Board**

PROJECT SUMMARY: Bayou Greenways is a public-private partnership envisioning the transformation of 3,000 acres of underutilized land along nine major waterways to create a 150-mile network of connected parks and trails along Houston's major waterways.

PLAN STRATEGIES:

- Rehabilitate ecological function
- Increase floodwater conveyance capacity
- Promote low-impact development
- Increase visibility of the bayou
- Increase residential opportunities downtown
- Ensure equity of access along bayou
- Maintain affordability
- Encourage mixed-use redevelopment
- Promote joint public private development



TITLE: **City of Houston Parks Master Plan**

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): **Houston Parks & Recreation Department**

DATE: **Parks Master Plan Phase II - December 2015**

PROJECT SUMMARY: Phase II builds upon the previous Parks Master Plans that were completed in 2001 and 2007 to help guide the growth of the City's parks and recreation system. Specifically to build on the 2007 "Big Moves": To create Equity and Balance in the System, Create Connections, Demonstrate Environmental Leadership, Provide Equitable Services for all Citizens. The City of Houston parks system encompasses 370 parks and over 37,859 acres of parkland. In 2007, the City of Houston passed the Parks and Open Space Ordinance as a part of Chapter 42: Subdivisions, Developments and Platting Ordinance. This ordinance divided the City of Houston into 21 Park Sectors.

Priorities Identified for each Park Sector (ranked on assessment done per Park Sector using Trust for Public Land ParkScore)
1. Acquire new parkland
2. Revitalize existing parks
3. Develop Neighborhood connections to parks and trails
4. Develop partnerships with the school system and other entities
5. Preserve environmentally sensitive areas
6. Develop new park facilities

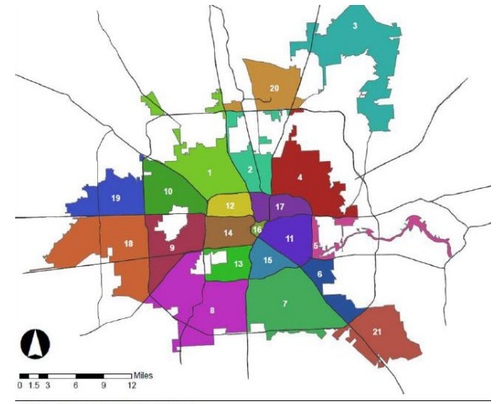


Figure 3: The City of Houston Park Sector Map

SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS THAT APPLY TO WESTCHASE LC STUDY AREA:

Category	Summary	Cost	Funding Sources	Progress (Planned, In Progress, Completed)
Open Space	Park Sector 9 221 acres of parkland are needed Deficient in: playgrounds, picnic shelters, trails, outdoor basketball courts, tennis courts, volleyball courts, dog parks, skate parks, community centers, swimming pools	$-$$$	Houston residents	In Progress
Open Space	Park Sector 18 401 acres of parkland are needed Deficient in: playgrounds, picnic shelters, trails, outdoor basketball courts, tennis courts, volleyball courts, dog parks, skate parks, community centers, swimming pools, spraygrounds	$-$$$		In Progress

TITLE: Houston Bike Plan

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): City of Houston

DATE: 2016

PROJECT SUMMARY: The Houston Bike Plan was approved by City Council March 22, 2017. It is a component plan linked to the City of Houston's Complete Streets Executive Order with the ambitious goal of becoming a gold-level bicycle-friendly city by 2027. It establishes a framework based in policies, projects, and programs to reach this vision and is led by multiple departments at the City of Houston, in particular, Planning and Development, Public Works and Engineering, and Parks and Recreation. The plan has short and long term implications for the Westchase District Livable Centers study area.

SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS THAT APPLY TO WESTCHASE LC STUDY AREA:

Category	Summary	Cost	Funding Sources	Progress (Planned, In Progress, Completed)
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Gessner Briarpark Trail on Westpark utility corridor (off-street trail)	$$		In Progress
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Seagler Road from Westheimer to Richmond (dedicated in-street ROW)	$$		Planned
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Westcenter Drive from Richmond to Westpark (dedicated in-street ROW)	$$		Planned
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Meadowglen from BW8 to Gessner (dedicated in-street ROW)	$$		Planned
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Tanglewilde Street from Briar Forest to Westpark Drive (shared on-street)	$$		Planned
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Richmond Avenue (dedicated in-street ROW)	$$		Planned
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Elmside Drive from Westheimer to Richmond (off-street trail)	$$		Planned
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Woodchase Drive from Richmond to Gessner Briarpark Trail (off-street trail)	$$		Planned
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Westpark Trail from Westpark Drive to Briarpark Drive (off-street trail)	$$		Planned
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Library Loop Trail extension from Rogerdale through drainage ditch to Meadowglen (off-street trail)	$$		Planned
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Westheimer Boulevard (dedicated in-street ROW)	$$		Planned

TITLE: Code of Ordinance, Chapter 42

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): City of Houston

DATE: Ongoing

PROJECT SUMMARY: The City of Houston's regulating land use policies reside within Chapter 42 Subdivisions, Development and Platting of the city's code of ordinances. Chapter 42 was reviewed for the Westchase District Livable Centers Study to determine the impact of the land development code on the study area in Westchase. The following sections listed below were identified as the most pertinent for this study:

42-150 Building Lines (i.e. setbacks)

42-232 Multifamily Residential Points of Access

42-235 Multifamily Performance Standards

42-236 Multifamily Open Space

42-272 Abutting Development Standards

Setbacks in the district are primarily governed by protective covenants established in 1974. The City's Chapter 42 regulates setbacks in streets that are not listed within the protective covenants. Please see page 27 for a table of setbacks throughout the district, as determined by both sets of regulations. Setbacks governed by Chapter 42 vary based on use, street classification, and right-of-way. The study area setbacks are 10 feet or 25 feet for most local and collector streets, depending on the land use, and 25 feet on most major thoroughfares.

PLAN REVIEW

TITLE: **Houston Code of Ordinance Chapter 26**

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): **City of Houston**

DATE: **Ongoing**

PROJECT SUMMARY: Parking requirements are governed by protective covenants in Westchase Subdivision Section One and the City of Houston's Chapter 26 where the covenants do not apply. Listed below are the parking requirements by use.

CHAPTER 26 PARKING RATIOS

Class 2 Residential	
Multi-family	1.250 parking spaces for each efficiency dwelling unit
	1.333 parking spaces for each one-bedroom dwelling unit
Retirement community	1.0 parking space for every 6 beds, plus 1.0 parking space per employee on largest shift
Hotel or motel	1.0 parking space for each sleeping room up and including 250 rooms
	0.75 parking space for each sleeping room from 251 rooms to 500 rooms
	0.50 parking spaces for each sleeping room in excess of 500 rooms
Class 3 Health Care Facilities	
Hospital	2.2 parking spaces for each bed
Psychiatric hospital	1.0 parking space for every 4 beds and 1.0 parking space for every 4 employees
Clinic (medical complex)	2.7 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of gross floor area (GFA)
Clinic (medical or dental)	3.5 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Nursing home	1.0 parking space for every 3 beds and 1.0 parking space for every 4 employees
Funeral home or mortuary	0.5 parking spaces for every chapel seat
Veterinary clinic	5.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of UFA
Class 4 Industrial and Commercial Manufacturing	
Light manufacturing	2.5 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of GFA of office space; and
	1.0 parking space per 1,500 square feet of GFA of assembly space
Min Warehouse	1.0 parking spaces for every 50 storage units or bays
Class 5 Religious and Educational	
Church	1.0 parking space for every 5 fixed seats in auditorium or sanctuary
	1.0 parking spaces for every 40 square feet of GFA in the main auditorium or sanctuary
Nursery or day care	1.0 parking space for every employee on duty during the largest shift, plus 1.0 parking space for every 5 children in attendance
Elementary School	1.0 parking space per every 12 occupants
Junior high school	1.0 parking space for every 7 occupants
Senior High School	1.0 parking space per every 3 occupants
College or University	1.0 parking space for every 3 employees plus 1.0 parking space for every 10 students residing on campus and 1.0 parking space for every 5 students no residing on campus
Library	1.2 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Art gallery or museum	3.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA of exhibit area or gallery space

Class 6 Recreation and Entertainment	
Golf course	5.0 parking spaces for every green
Movie theatre	0.3 parking spaces for every seat
Bowling alley	5.0 parking spaces per lane
Theater	1.0 parking space for every 3 seats
Tennis or racket club	3.0 parking space per court
Sports club or health spa	5.0 parking space for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Roller or ice skating rink	5.0 parking space for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Swimming club	9.0 parking spaces per employee
Park (5-10 acres)	1.0 parking space for the first 2 acres and 1.0 parking space for each additional acre
Park (over 10 acres)	5.0 spaces for the first acre; and 1.0 space for each additional 10 acres
Park pavilion	1.0 parking space for each picnic table
Sports complex	1.0 parking space for every 40 square feet of seating
Arcade or game room	5.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Class 7 Food and Beverage	
Small restaurant	8.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA, outdoor decks, patio, and seating areas in excess of 15% GFA
Neighborhood restaurant	9.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA outdoor decks, patio, and seating areas in excess of 15% GFA
Restaurant	10.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Tavern or pub	10.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Small bar	12.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Bar club or lounge	14.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Class 8 Retail Services	
Supermarket	5.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Furniture store	2.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Retail store	4.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Building materials or home improvement	4.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Barber or beauty shop	8.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Shopping center (neighborhood)	4.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA, plus the incremental increase in number of parking spaces required by 26-495a
Shopping center (regional)	4.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Class 9 Automobiles	
Auto sales	5.5 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Repair	5.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Car wash auto	2.5 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA
Car wash other	1.0 parking space per bay or stall
Service station	3.0 parking spaces for each service stall and 1.0 space for each employee on duty during largest shift
Auto parts	4.0 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA of retail area

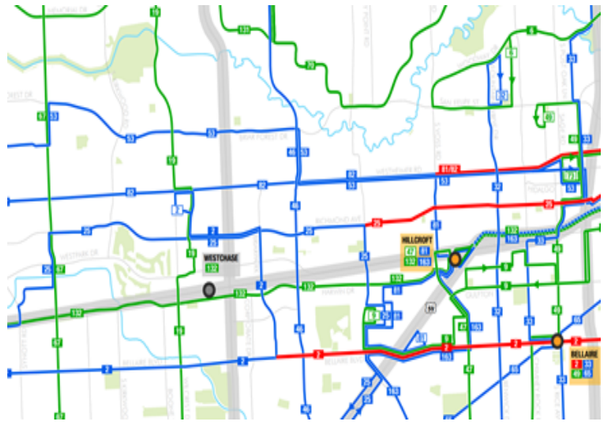
TITLE: System Reimagined

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): METRO

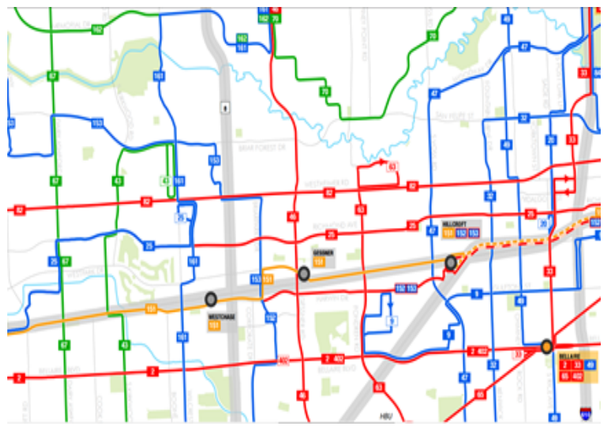
DATE: 2015

PROJECT SUMMARY: In 2012 the METRO Board approved the development of the Transit System Reimagining project as a transformational and fundamental rethinking of the bus network to clarify the goals for the system, address ridership challenges, and optimize the system. The project was implemented August 2015. Within the Westchase District Livable Centers' study area the changes have resulted in the conversion of three 30-minute bus routes (blue) into high-frequency routes (red) with 6-10 minute frequencies during peak-hour travel and 15 minute frequencies on off-peak (Routes 82, 25, and 46) and additional express routes at the Gessner Park and Ride (151) and through Briarpark Drive (153) that connect transit stations in West Houston to regionally-significant employment centers.

BEFORE SYSTEM REIMAGINED:



METRO'S NEW BUS NETWORK:



TITLE: City of Houston Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): City of Houston

DATE: Annual

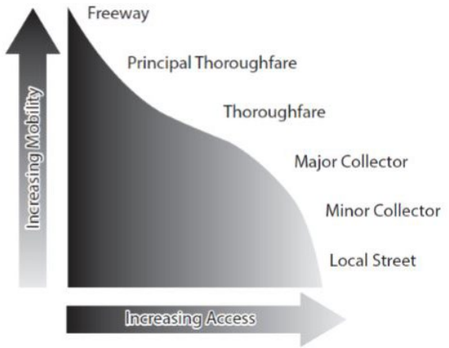
PROJECT SUMMARY: Through a coordinated process between the city, developers and neighborhoods, the City annually produces the Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan (MTFP). This plan identifies sections of roadways that are in need of expansion, either by lengthening or widening due to such issues as congestion, mobility, and future development plans. It serves as an effective instrument in guiding development, as well as providing mobility and accessibility to a large number of people in the greater Houston area.

THE SYSTEM USES SEVERAL FACTORS TO CLASSIFY STREETS INTO CATEGORIES:

- Length of road Existing and projected traffic volume
- Character of adjacent properties
- Possibility of expansion, including man-made and natural barriers
- Need to preserve thoroughfare corridors
- Classifications and descriptions

Through this process, streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of traffic service that they are intended to provide. All streets and highways are grouped into one of these classes depending on the character of traffic and the degree of land accessibility. The classifications in the MTFP relate to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Functional Classification Guidelines and include:

- Freeways/Tollways
- Major Thoroughfares
- Transit Corridor Streets
- Collector Streets
- Local Streets



SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS THAT APPLY TO WESTCHASE LC STUDY AREA:

Category	Summary	Cost	Funding Sources	Progress (Planned, Proposed, In Progress, Completed)
Mobility (transit, bike/ped)	Rogerdale to be widened from Westpark to Westheimer	$$$ Proposed policies and programs		

TITLE: **Greater West Houston Mobility Plan**

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): **HGAC**

DATE: **October 2015**

PROJECT SUMMARY: The West Houston Mobility Plan is a comprehensive multi-modal transportation study that evaluates mobility and land use scenarios in three of Houston's major activity centers (Westchase District, Memorial City, and the Energy Corridor). The plan examines transportation strategies for freeways, tollways, local streets, transit, and pedestrian and bicycle networks. The plan evaluates capital projects in their ability to enhance connectivity, add vehicular capacity and facilitate long-term mode shift away from single-occupant vehicles through additional transit, bicycle and pedestrian linkages to origins and destinations.

Based on this analysis, recommendations were made related to the built environment, roadway projects, intersection improvements, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, transit service enhancements, transit facility improvements and policy guidelines. The plan also included a toolbox which outlined funding opportunities related to the implementation of projects and recommendations.

SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS THAT APPLY TO WESTCHASE LC STUDY AREA:

Category	Summary	Cost	Funding Sources	Progress (Planned, Proposed, In Progress, Completed)
Mobility (bike/ped, transit	MTFP Addition- Seagler from Westheimer Road to Westpark Tollway	$ Proposed policies and programs		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit	MTFP Addition- Rogerdale from Harwin Dr to Bellaire Blvd.	$ Proposed policies and programs		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit	MTFP Addition- Hayes Road from Wilcrest Dr to Richmond Ave	$ Proposed policies and programs		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit	Roadway Projects- Richmond Ave from Wilcrest Dr to Westheimer Road	$$$		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit	Roadway Projects- Meadowglen across Beltway 8	$$$		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit	Roadway Projects- Westpark Drive from Gessner Rd. to Highway 6	$$$		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit	Roadway Projects- Town Park Drive cross Beltway 8 and utility ROW	$$$		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)ev	High capacity transit service along Westpark Tollway	$		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit	Intersection Improvements- Westheimer @ Wilcrest	$$		Proposed
Category	Summary	Cost	Funding Sources	Progress (Planned, Proposed, In Progress, Completed)
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Intersection Improvements- Westheimer @ Beltway 8	$$$		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Intersection Improvements- Harwin @ Wilcres	$$		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Intersection Improvements- Westpark @ Briarpark	$$		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Proposed Bike path- Beltway 8 Frontage Roads	$		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Proposed Bike Path- Deerwood Trail	$		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Proposed Bike Path- Brays Bayou Connector Trail	$		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Proposed Bike Path- HCC Campus Trail	$		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Bike Path Street Crossing- Multiple Locations	$$		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Westchase Circulator	$$$		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Possible TOD redevelopment of Westchase Park and Ride	$$$ Proposed policies and programs		Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped, transit)	Enhanced transfer point – Westheimer @ Wilcrest and Westheimer @ Gessner	$$		Proposed

PLAN REVIEW

TITLE: **Westchase Long Range Plan**

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): **Westchase District**

DATE: **2006**

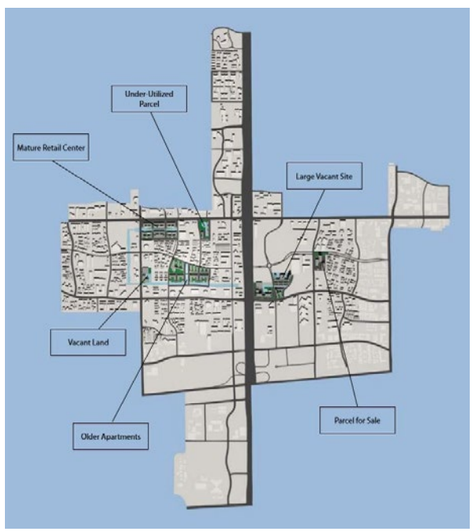
PROJECT SUMMARY: The long-range plan for the Westchase District outlines a vision to become the commercial and cultural heart of West Houston. The plan outlines a strategy to achieve the vision with public sector improvements to spur more investment, details public and private benefits, and includes opportunities for higher-value development.

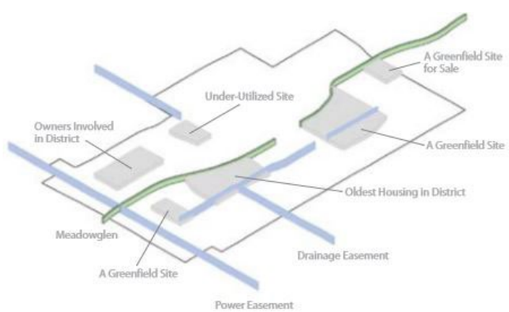
The livable centers' study area would have four "canal" waterways. One would be created as a detention canal and three others are extensions from this detention canal eastward to Gessner Road and southward to Westpark Tollway. This plan calls for the open space network as a collective bank to qualify for the City of Houston's compensating open space requirement for moderate-density residential projects (Chapter 42-183, Standards for Compensating Open Space).

Meadowglen is identified as Westchase's most distinctive street due to existing right of way and building setbacks and includes a vision for landscaped medians, on-street parking, and wider sidewalks. This plan calls for four "landscape streets" (ambiguous; not defined in the plan) which include Richmond Avenue, Westpark Drive, Briarpark Drive, and Gessner Road. The district is also proposing new streets along parcel boundaries on the eastern half of the study area ("block-busting") between Meadowglen-Westheimer and Meadowglen-Richmond, though, long blocks on the western half are ignored. Shared parking and a higher and best use of the land is touted as a solution to property owners' concerns regarding reconfiguration of their parcels toward newly formed public streets.

This plan also supports additional transit services such as regional commuter service to the employment center and a circulation shuttle on Seagler Road that would loop around Sam Houston Tollway through Westheimer Road on the north, Rogerdale Road on the west, and Westpark Drive on the south. Long-term connections to the light and commuter rail network are desired along Westpark Tollway. The plan calls for a twofold strategy to enhance parking in the district – adding public parking garages as a park once strategy and more on-street parking to reduce the need for off-street parking and encourage a better pedestrian environment (park once and walk). One public parking garage is proposed at Westheimer Road and Briargrove Street.

LONG RANGE PLANS





SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS THAT APPLY TO WESTCHASE DISTRICT LC STUDY AREA:

Category	Summary	Cost	Funding Sources	Progress (Planned, Proposed, In Progress, Completed)
Urban Design (Canal System)	Off-site detention, capitalizing on assets, adding value, recreational gateways, making Westchase a destination	$$$	380 agreement HCFD WD Private developers	Planned
Open Space network	Adding uses to canals, utility corridors, and rights of way, creating higher density and price premiums, more greenery and recreation	$$		In Progress
Streets into viable public spaces	Adding character, becoming more pedestrian friendly, Supporting mixed uses	$$		In progress
Smaller Blocks & Street grid	New local streets, Space for new streets	$$$		Planned
Mobility and parking	Thoroughfare and highway improvements, mass transit expansion, more and better parking options, bike-ped enhancements	$$$		In progress
Branding	Creating a sense of place and pride, Building perception of value that stimulates demand, Keeping tax dollars in the city	$		In progress

TITLE: Westchase 380 Agreement (City of Houston, Texas, Ordinance No. 2013-945)

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): City of Houston

DATE: 2013

PROJECT SUMMARY: Chapter 380 Agreements are economic development incentives cities or counties can utilize that are enabled by the State of Texas' Local Government Code (Texas Local Government Code, Title 12, Subtitle A, Chapter 380). These development incentives can take the form of loans, grants, property tax abatements, infrastructure commitments, or paying back portions of generated sales taxes to a private development with the intent to spur economic development, increase tax revenues, and create jobs. 380 Agreements are a way for local governments to determine an economic development strategy, and consequently, negotiate incentives with interested developers to meet both public and private goals. Below is the 10 year plan for the CIP 380 projects from 2013 to 2022.

SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS THAT APPLY TO WESTCHASE LC STUDY AREA:

Category	Summary	Cost	Funding Sources	Progress (Planned, Proposed, In Progress, Completed)
Urban Design	Festival Park at West 8 Tower	$$$	380 agreement	Planned
Mobility	Meadowglen roundabouts at Briarpark and Elmside	$$$	380 agreement	Planned
Mobility	Meadowglen signature street BW8 to Gessner	$$$	380 agreement	Planned
Mobility	Infill streets	$$	380 agreement	Planned
Mobility	Canal - west 8 tower southeast perimeter	$$$	380 agreement	Planned
Mobility	MTF reconstruction	$$	380 agreement	Planned
Mobility	Westchase Transit Center	$$	380 agreement	Planned
Mobility	3 Parking garages	$$$	380 agreement	Planned
Mobility	Great streets (Rogerdale and Seagler)	$$$	380 agreement	Planned
Open Space	7 pocket parks	$$	380 agreement	Planned
Urban Design	Conveyance and detention canals	$$$	380 agreement	Planned
Urban Design	Icon and gateway elements	$	380 agreement	Planned

TITLE: Protective Covenants for Westchase Subdivision Section One

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): Westchase Community Association (WCA)

DATE: 1974

PROJECT SUMMARY: The study area is governed by protective covenants since 1974 that establish permitted uses, architectural and design features, building setbacks, parking facilities, landscaping, signs, and maintenance features

LAND USE:

PERMITTED USES:

- Office
- Commercial processing
- Research
- Servicing
- Light industrial
- Manufacturing
- Warehousing
- Distribution purposes

PROHIBITED USES UNLESS WCA GRANTS ACCESS:

- Restaurants
- Fueling stations
- Motor hotels
- Financial institutions
- Retail

ARCHITECTURAL AND DESIGN: The Westchase Community Association has the discretion to deny any construction or development plans and could provide development guidelines for site plans, architecture or landscaping.

BUILDING SETBACKS: Setbacks for streets listed on the following page are governed by the protective covenants in this agreement or subsequent amendments -- City of Houston's Chapter 42 governs setbacks on all other streets in the study area and are reviewed in that section.

PARKING & LOADING:

All loading docks must be screened from public view and cannot face any streets unless surrounded by streets.
Off-street parking: 1.0 parking space per

- 1,000 sq. ft. warehouse building area
- 500 sq. ft. manufacturing building area
- 250 sq. ft. office building area or ratio of 1 parking space per 2 occupants (use highest parking spaces of two options)
- 7 parking spaces per every 10 occupants if office area equals to 100,000 sq. ft. or greater

PARKING PROHIBITED:

- On-street parking on any public or private street
- Within 5 ft. of side or rear property line

TITLE: **Protective Covenants for Westchase Subdivision Section One (continued)**

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): **Westchase Community Association (WCA)**

DATE: **1974**

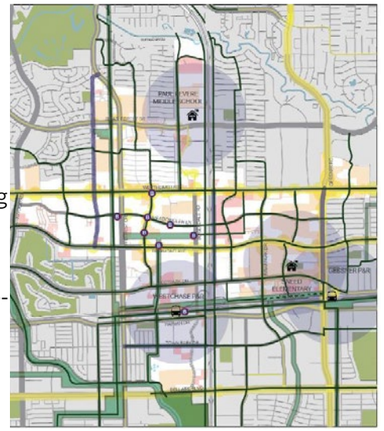
SETBACK TABLE: The below setback table summarizes setbacks required by the protective covenants (at right) and compares these to the setbacks that would otherwise be required by the City of Houston's Chapter42.

Public Space	Classification	Hierarchy Table	Jurisdiction	COH Setback if Single Family	COH Setback if Single Family backs to ROW	COH Setback if Multi-Family Residential	COH General Setback Req.	Covenant Setback
Westheimer	Principal Thoroughfare	P-8-120	TxDOT		10 ft.		25 ft.	
Gessner	Principal Thoroughfare	P-6-110	COH		10 ft.		25 ft.	
Richmond	Thoroughfare	T-6-100	COH		10 ft.		25 ft.	60 ft.
Westpark Drive	Thoroughfare	T-4-100	COH		10 ft.		25 ft.	50 ft.
Briarpark	Major Collector	MJ-4-80	COH	0-25 ft.		25 ft.	10 ft.	40 ft. or 60 ft.
Meadowglen Lane	Major Collector	MJ-2-60	COH	0-25 ft.		25 ft.	10 ft.	
Rogerdale Road	Major Collector	MJ-4-70	COH	0-25 ft.		25 ft.	10 ft.	
Elmside Drive	Local		COH	0-25 ft.		25 ft.	10 ft.	
Woodchase	Local		COH	0-25 ft.		25 ft.	10 ft.	
Pagewood Lane	Local		COH	0-25 ft.		25 ft.	10 ft.	
Westchase Drive	Local		COH	0-25 ft.		25 ft.	10 ft.	40 ft.
Westcenter Drive	Local		COH	0-25 ft.		25 ft.	10 ft.	
Westoffice Drive	Local		COH	0-25 ft.		25 ft.	10 ft.	40 ft.
Westmart Drive	Local		COH	0-25 ft.		25 ft.	10 ft.	40 ft.
Seagler Road	Local		COH	0-25 ft.		25 ft.	10 ft.	
Tanglewilde Drive	Local		COH	0-25 ft.		25 ft.	10 ft.	
Ella Lee Lane	Local		COH	0-25 ft.		25 ft.	10 ft.	

TITLE: **Westchase Mobility Plan**

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): **Westchase District**

DATE: **March 2017**



PROJECT SUMMARY: The plan's purpose is to improve mobility traveling to and within Westchase District by expanding transportation choices for residents, businesses, and visitors to the District while also supporting growth and development. The plan is an effort to bring together recent planning efforts conducted by the District and identify strategic near and long term mobility improvements. The sections within the plan include an analysis of existing conditions, development of goals, recommendations, and implementation strategies. Through the plan process, several key problems and desired were identified including access to Westchase District from tollway, pedestrian and transit service need improving and overall road conditions need to be improved. This helped lead to the development of the following goals. Each of these goals included three or more recommendations aimed at improving the multimodal transportation network while supporting context sensitive infrastructure and more mixed-use, pedestrian friendly development.:

- Promote great street designs that provide safe, efficient, and accessible transportation choices for all
- Increase the District's multimodal choices
- Improve regional connectivity and address critical bottlenecks to and from the District
- Encourage walkable (re)development that supports the District's vision of being West Houston's Downtown
- Coordinate planning efforts between agencies to fund and implement prioritized projects

SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS THAT APPLY TO WESTCHASE LC STUDY AREA:

Category	Summary	Cost	Funding Sources	Progress (Planned, Proposed, In Progress, Completed)
Mobility (bike/ped)	Plan and promote great streets	$	COH Developers	In Progress
Mobility (bike/ped)	Targeted street reconstruction	$$$	COH Grants	Planned
Urban Design (connectivity)	Expand major thoroughfare plan network	$ Proposed policies and programs	COH	Planned
Mobility (bike/ped)	Increase trail and bikeway network	$$	COH Grants Developers	Planned

TITLE: **Westchase Mobility Plan (continued)**

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): **Westchase District**

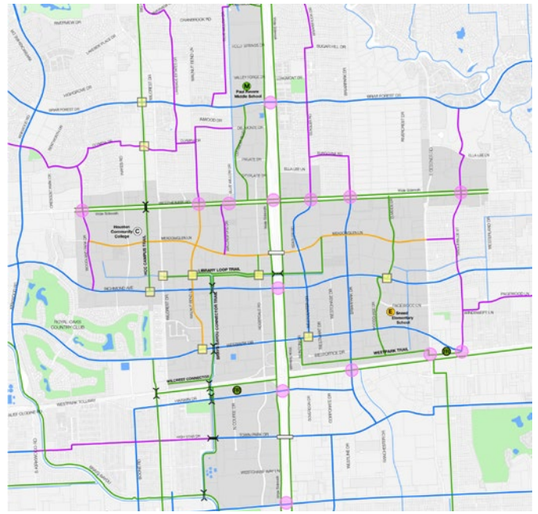
DATE: **March 2017**

Category	Summary	Cost	Funding Sources	Progress (Planned, Proposed, In Progress, Completed)
Mobility (bike/ped)	Connected sidewalk network	$	COH Grants METRO	Planned
Mobility (bike/ped)	Enhance existing transit service	$$	COH CIP Grants METRO	Planned
Mobility (bike/ped)	Expand transit routes and add service	$$	Corporations Grants METRO	Planned
Mobility (transit)	Develop a high capacity transit network	$$$	Harris County METRO	Planned
Mobility (bike/ped)	Introduce Bike Share network	$	Business Property Owners Grants	Planned
Mobility (transit)	Support expanded commuter network	$$	METRO Fort Bend County Transit Grants	Planned
Mobility (transit)	Support improved toll ways access and operations	$$	HCTRA Grants	Planned
Mobility (transit)	Minimize impacts of bottlenecks	$$	COH Grants Developers	Planned
Urban Design (design)	Create character and development guidelines	$ Proposed policies and programs	COH Developers	Planned
Urban Design (connectivity)	Create a walkable street grid	$$	COH Property owners Developers	In Progress
Open Space	Encourage transit and trail oriented development (TTOD)	$$$	METRO Developers Grants	Planned

TITLE: **Westchase Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan**

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): **Westchase District**

DATE: **December 2016**



PROJECT SUMMARY: The plan identifies bicycle and pedestrian needs and recommends improvements prioritized according to agreed-upon goals to guide the expenditure of limited capital and operating resources for greenways, bikeways, and sidewalks. The plan identifies future bikeway opportunities as well as improvements to existing facilities. The plan consisted of three goals: Connectivity, Accessibility, and Health and Safety.

An inventory of existing conditions and documentation of pedestrian and bicyclist travel needs, the plan identifies several recommendations for improvements to pedestrian, bicycle, and shared off-street circulations networks. A bicycle/pedestrian planning toolkit was also developed to assist in the implementation of projects and provide a guideline based on best practices throughout the city and state.

SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS THAT APPLY TO WESTCHASE LC STUDY AREA:

Category	Summary	Cost	Funding Sources	Progress (Planned, Proposed, In Progress, Completed)
Mobility (bike/ped)	Improve sidewalk connectivity	$$	COH Grants 380 Agreement	Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped)	Improve existing crossings and provide new crossings at trail connections	$$	COH Grants 380 Agreement	Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped)	Improve existing crossings and provide new crossings at trail connections	$$	COH Grants 380 Agreement	Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped)	Improve intersections to increase safety of pedestrians and bicyclists	$$	COH Grants 380 Agreement	Proposed
Mobility (bike/ped)	Create a convenient, accessible bikeway network	$$	COH Grants 380 Agreement	Proposed

TITLE: Westchase Streetscapes Plan

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): HGAC

DATE: 2016

PROJECT SUMMARY: The Westheimer corridor was selected for back of curb streetscape redevelopment. The scope includes the design of sidewalk improvements, other pedestrian and transit oriented amenities and traffic signal upgrades.

KEY IMPROVEMENTS: Intersection modifications to enhance pedestrian safety, signage and wayfinding, decorative street lighting, pedestrian lighting, pedestrian plazas, site furniture, improved bus shelters, enhanced pavement treatments, accessible curb ramps, improved crosswalk markings, and landscaping.

SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS THAT APPLY TO WESTCHASE LC STUDY AREA:

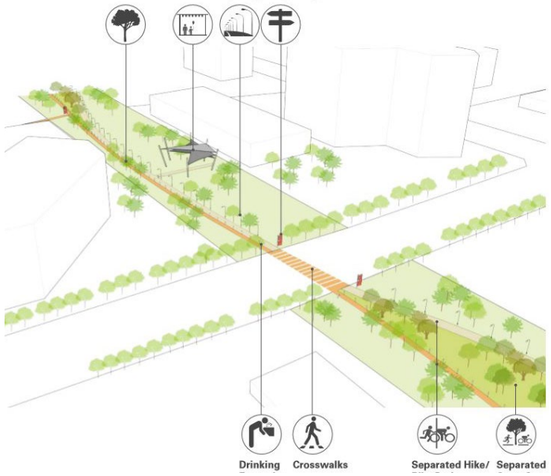
Category	Summary	Cost	Funding Sources	Progress (Planned, Proposed, In Progress, Completed)
Urban Design	New street furniture	$	380 Agreement TIP	Planned
Urban Design	Pedestrian-scale street lights and signals	$	380 Agreement TIP	Planned
Urban Design	Street trees and related land-scaping	$	380 Agreement TIP	Planned
Urban Design	Sidewalks and enhanced crosswalks with decorative hardscapes	$	380 Agreement TIP	Planned
Urban Design	Wayfinding signage	$	380 Agreement TIP	Planned
Urban Design	Pedestrian lighting	$	380 Agreement TIP	Planned
Urban Design	Enhanced bus shelters	$	380 Agreement TIP	Planned
Urban Design	Upgraded and aesthetically pleasing traffic signals	$	380 Agreement TIP	Planned

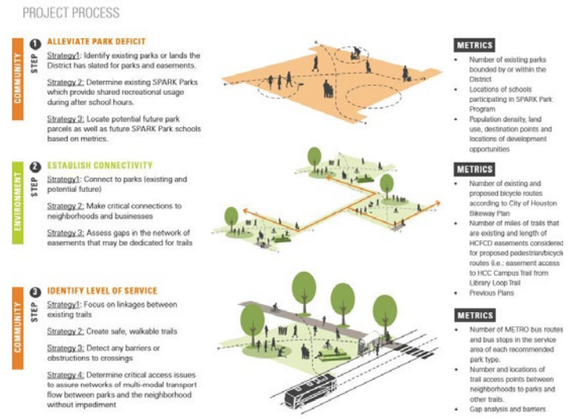
TITLE: Westchase Trails and Parks Master Plan

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): Westchase District

DATE: 2016

PROJECT SUMMARY: The goal of this plan is to develop a community-supported plan that provides guidance for the future development of Westchase District's recreation, open space, trails and parks programming. The plan will guide policy development, prioritize demands and opportunities, and generate a strategic action plan.
The plan utilizes inventories and assessment of existing amenities; analyze forecasted needs and implementation strategies; analyzes demographic trends; defines level of service analysis for existing and future facilities; prioritizes demands and identifies opportunities for trail and park expansion.





SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS THAT APPLY TO WESTCHASE LC STUDY AREA:

Category	Summary	Cost	Funding Sources	Progress (Planned, Proposed, In Progress, Completed)
Open Space	Increase trail levels of comfort	$$	Identify potential partners	In Progress
Open Space	Decrease barriers to trail access	$$	Identify potential partners	In Progress
Open Space	Improve safety and add amenities that will serve trail users	$$	Identify potential partners	In Progress

TITLE: Meadowglen Lane Corridor Study Master Plan

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): Westchase District

DATE: June 2015

PROJECT SUMMARY: Westchase Meadowglen Road Reconstruction consists of full streetscape reconstruction along Meadowglen Lane. It is defined by distinct eastern and western segments, separated by the Beltway. The designed proposed in the plan should be a the catalyst for future capital improvement project. The streetscape should have an aesthetic and functional design that prioritizes public safety, sense of community, economic development, mobility, artistic appearance and sustainability while setting new trends and expectations within the Westchase Management District. The current challenges facing the area are a lack of consistent and continuous amenities, continuous sidewalks, large existing trees near or within the Right-of-Way and a lack of unity and District identity.

SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS THAT APPLY TO WESTCHASE LC STUDY AREA:

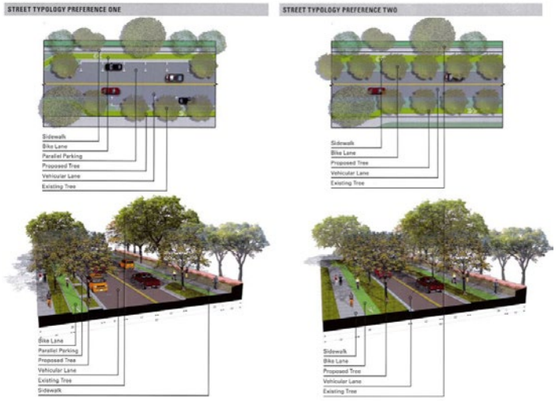
Category	Summary	Cost	Funding Sources	Progress (Planned, Proposed, In Progress, Completed)
Urban Design	Gathering space along street	$ Proposed policies and programs	Identify potential partners	Proposed
Urban Design	New street furniture, trash bins, seating, signage	$	Identify potential partners	Proposed
Urban Design	Increase street trees	$	Identify potential partners	Proposed
Mobility	Continuous sidewalks (decreased distance between)	$	Identify potential partners	Proposed
Mobility	Improve infrastructure as an element of the overall streetscape	$$$	Identify potential partners	Proposed

TITLE: Walnut Bend Lane Corridor Study Master Plan

AGENCY SPONSOR(S): Westchase District

DATE: June 2015

PROJECT SUMMARY: The plan for Westchase Walnut Bend Road Reconstruction consists of full streetscape reconstruction along Walnut Bend Lane from Westheimer Road to Westpark Drive. The vision for the streetscape redesign is to create complete streets with aesthetic consistency. The plan suggests improvements for pedestrian and cyclist environments, including expanding existing connectivity and creating a larger network of trail systems. The challenges facing the area are that it is automobile dominated and there is no strong community attraction or overall identity.



SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS THAT APPLY TO WESTCHASE LC STUDY AREA:

Category	Summary	Cost	Funding Sources	Progress (Planned, Proposed, In Progress, Completed)
Urban Design	New street furniture, trash bins, seating, signage, lighting	$	Identify potential partners	Proposed
Urban Design	Increase street trees	$$	Identify potential partners	Proposed
Mobility	Continuous sidewalks (decreased distance between)	$	Identify potential partners	Proposed
Mobility	Create on-street parking	$$	Identify potential partners	Proposed
Mobility	Create connections between mobility	$$	Identify potential partners	Proposed


WESTCHASE DISTRICT
Corporate
Challenge