



FIVE CORNERS DISTRICT

Environmental Design Master Plan

January 2014
Prepared by Asakura Robinson Company



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Environmental Design Master Plan presents strategies and recommendations to help the Five Corners District strengthen its identity as a beautiful, safe and attractive place to live, shop, work and invest in. The plan has been developed with the support of community members, business owners and other stakeholders, with the goal of envisioning how the district can best create an environment that builds on the district's assets as well as anticipates, guides and encourages this future development. The plan includes concepts for new development, mobility, parks and open space, landscaping, and branding. Through engagement efforts, including community meetings, stakeholder workshops, and business surveys, a set of goals was established to guide the master plan development and ensure a well-rounded approach to future improvements by the Five Corners District.

Using these goals as a starting point, the project team sought to understand the unique challenges and opportunities within the District in order to craft recommendations to meet the District's goals and vision.



Discussions with community members

GOALS

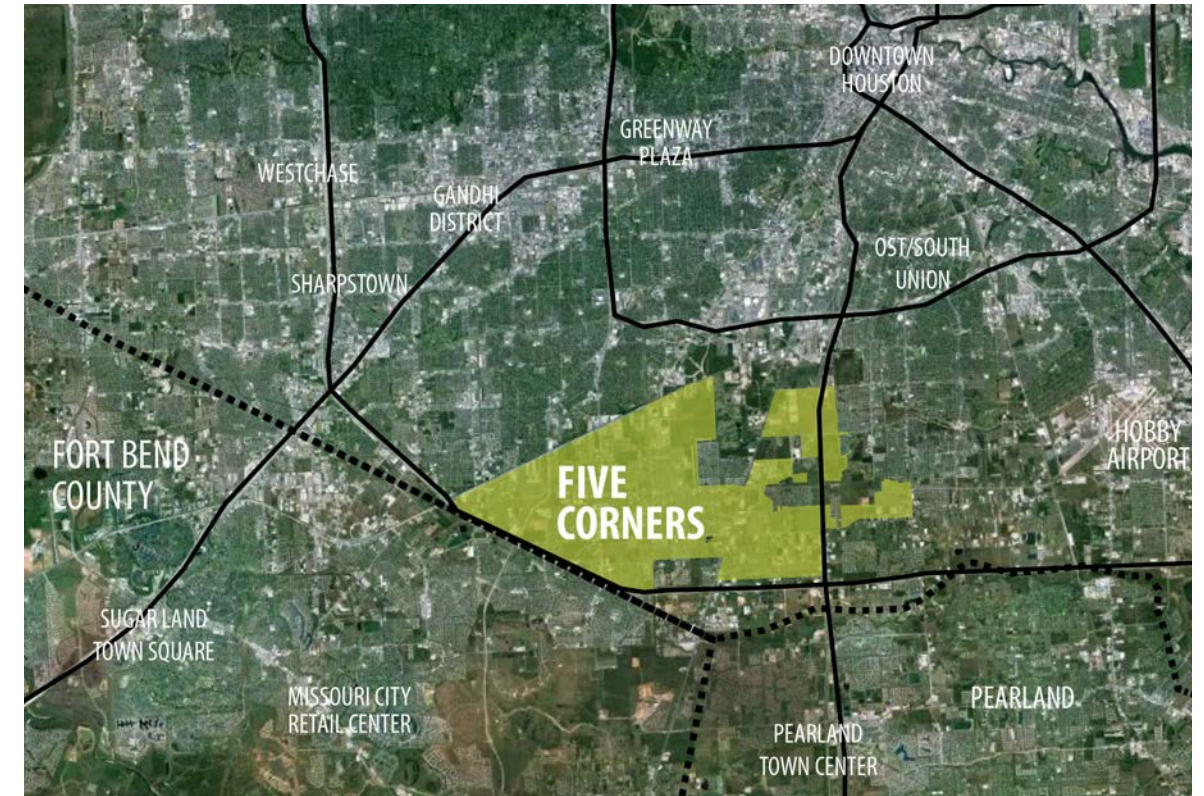
Working with community members and other stakeholders, a set of four goals have been developed for the project. The goals are:

1. Develop an appealing identity for Five Corners District to help attract investment and partnership with the management district.
2. Celebrate and connect district assets by prioritizing projects according to existing area investments and planned growth.
3. Promote walking and bicycling through infrastructure and design that can be supported by local organizations and programs.
4. Create a vision for future development of commercial, recreational, and civic activity that is to be promoted and supported by the Five Corners District.

FIVE CORNERS DISTRICT TODAY

Although it is one of the City of Houston's newest Management Districts, the area now known as Five Corners has a long history which is important to the many community members who have lived and worked within its borders for many, many years. Though the name is new, the community is bound together by this collective history and a desire to make the District a great place to live, work and play.

In the past decades, significant growth in bordering cities further from downtown Houston, namely Pearland, Missouri City and Sugar Land, have created new opportunities and development pressures for the community, which is roughly equidistant from Sugar Land Town Square and Houston's Texas Medical Center, two of the fastest growing destinations for jobs in the whole region. While much of this development has leapfrogged the Five Corners District, there is now significant opportunity for growth. Indeed, the community has more undeveloped land than any other area within Houston's city limits.



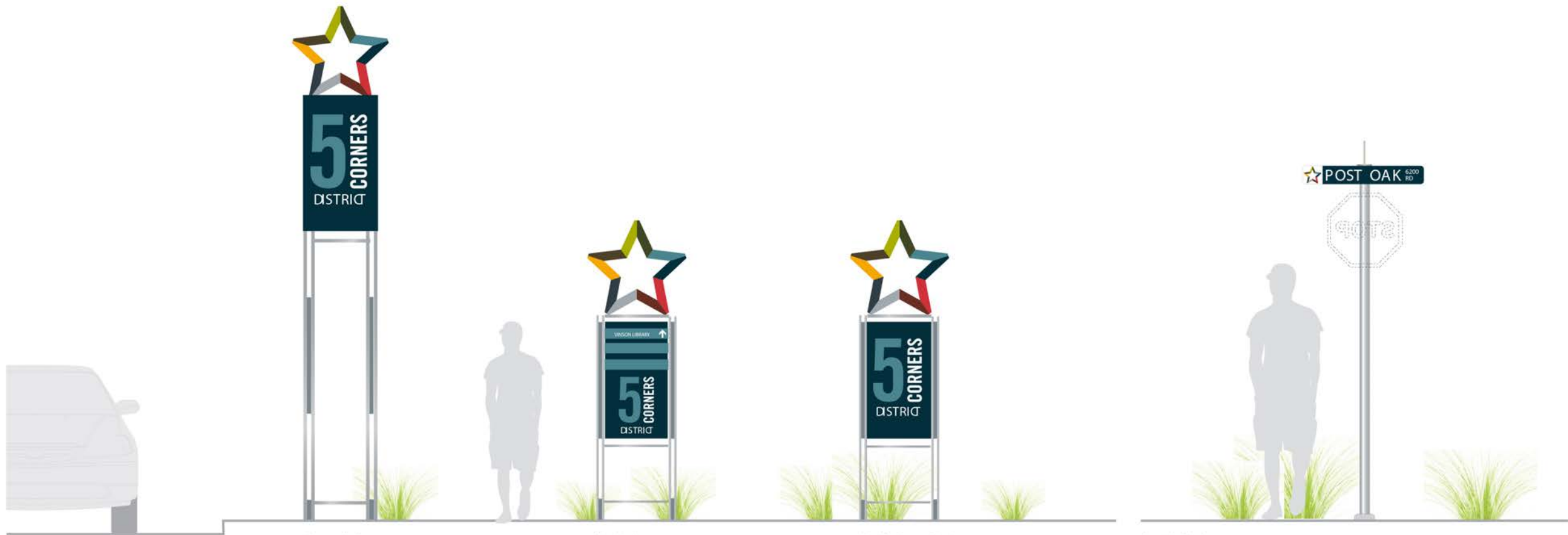
Five Corners District's location in the region

The area is bordered by three of Houston’s busiest and most important highways. Many people travel along the major thoroughfares that run through the district and connect the area to other parts of western and southern Houston, or travel through the Five Corners District on one of the three highways on their daily commute. While many of these people drive past the district without stopping, they are a significant population that could potentially see 5 Corners as a destination for recreation, shopping and living.

At the center of the district, Sims Bayou runs east and west. New projects to improve access and recreational opportunities along the bayou to help realize its potential as the District’s primary natural feature and a city-wide attraction.

Recommendations

At the district level, this a set of recommendations suggests how key places, corridors, open spaces and other assets can be connected to create a sense of identity. Guidelines for new developments and parks ensure that future public projects and new developments consistently support the district’s overall vision. Along with these strategies and guidelines, the Master Plan identifies three types of places within the district where urban design and infrastructure projects can have the greatest impact: gateways, key intersections and open space connections. Potential projects are identified and prioritized, and a sample design is given for each type of place using a “kit of parts approach.”



Five Corners District Street Signage

The plan lays out both short-term improvements and a long term vision for commercial growth in the District. As such, projects can be considered investments in creating desirable growth, increased property values, beautiful recreation areas, an improved quality of life for community members, a dynamic commercial environment for business owners, and attractive destinations for visitors.

In order to meet the goals of this study, six categories of recommendations have been developed: Visibility and Branding, Targeted Streetscape Improvements, Pedestrian and Bicycle Access, Parks and Open Spaces, Street Connectivity, and Commercial Development. The recommendations include infrastructural improvements, regulatory changes and programs that can be developed by the District. The time frame for these recommendations varies and are identified as either short, medium, or long-term projects. Together, the recommendations and proposed projects provide a pathway towards the vision created by the Five Corners Management District.

VISIBILITY AND BRANDING

These recommendations promote a unified identity for the community.

1. Create and install Five Corners signature street signage at identified intersections of major corridors and neighborhood streets.
2. Encourage subdivision developers to utilize signage templates and keep all signage cohesive with the overall branding of the District.
3. Create and install directional signs, identifier signs, gateway markers, and pavement markers at key points identified on the Targeted Streetscape Improvements map.
4. Apply graphic standards to all print and web media produced by the District.

TARGETED STREETScape IMPROVEMENT

These recommendations apply the graphic signage recommendations to specific corridors and intersections. The Targeted Streetscape Improvement recommendations are crafted as a “kit of parts” which can be applied incrementally as funding allows and adapted to different contexts while maintaining a consistent aesthetic feel.

1. Designate the points where major thoroughfares cross into Five Corners as “District Gateways.”
2. Highlight “Key Intersections” within the District and create a quality public realm for businesses and residents.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ACCESS

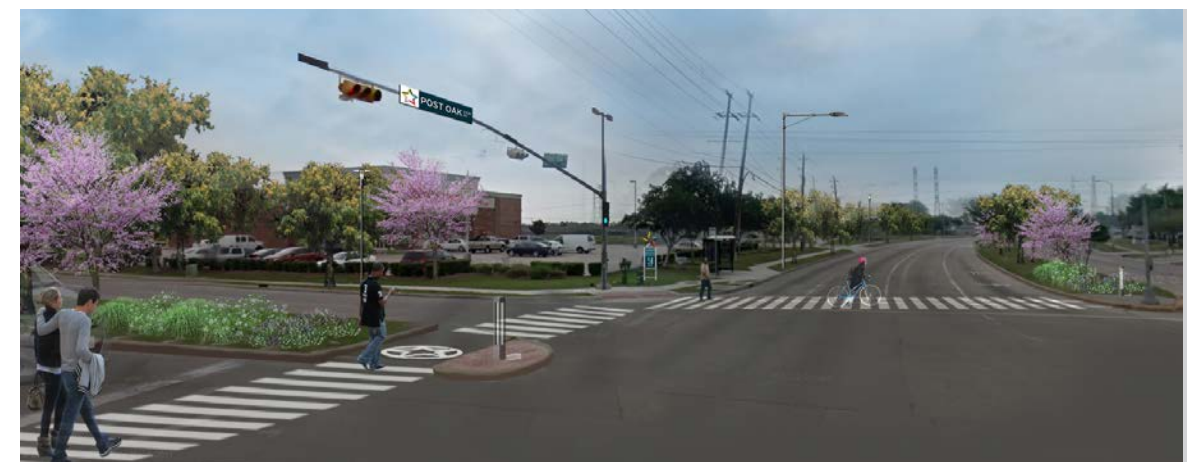
These recommendations will help create opportunities for District residents and visitors to take advantage of non-motorized travel options through the District and to promote access to the District’s natural areas.

1. Reduce residents’ reliance on the automobile by connecting neighborhoods to work, school, transit, retail, community destinations and recreational amenities through a trail system.
2. Develop safe and seamless connection between trails, sidewalks and bike routes for pedestrians and bicyclists to access destinations.
3. Initiate a District-wide “Safe Routes to Schools” program to support schools that are interested in participating.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

These recommendations help shape the natural spaces throughout the District, improve property values, and create new opportunities for recreation.

1. Enhance existing parks to include adequate signage, lighting, and park amenities. Enhancements should be based on “Types of Parks and Open Spaces” and “Design Guidelines for Parks and Open Space.”
2. Ensure that land along Sims Bayou is secured for parks and open space with future development opportunities, and actively enhance the access points to showcase the bayou as an asset within the district.



Key Intersection Improvements

- 3. Commission the design of new parks, in particular, a Linear Park for Buffalo Speedway in partnership with CenterPoint, and SPARK Parks in partnership with local schools.

STREET CONNECTIVITY

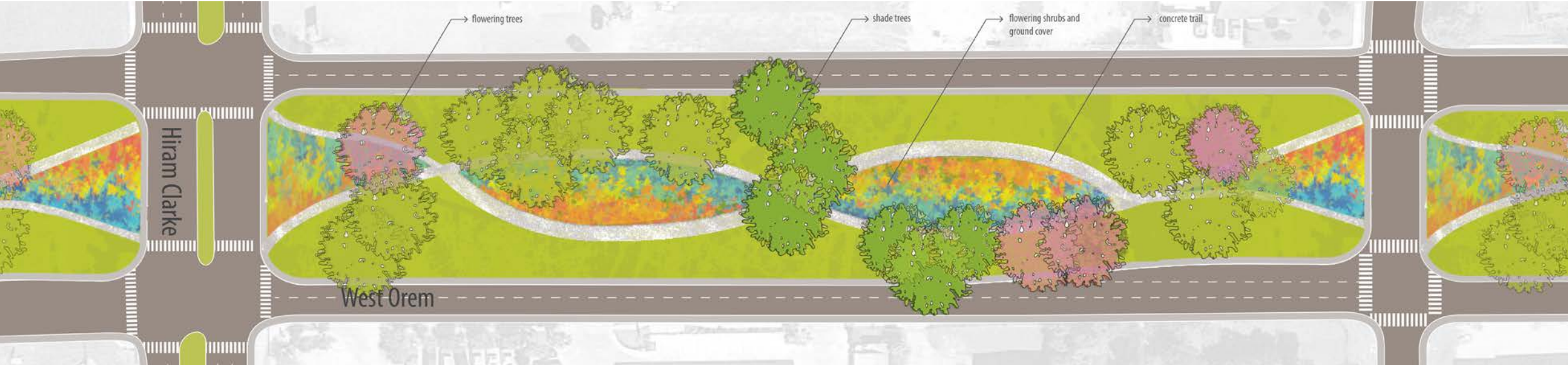
These recommendations promote long term mobility in the District.

- 1. Ensure that all street extensions accommodate not only automobile activity, but pedestrians and bicyclists too.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

These long-term recommendations help promote commerical development that adds to the character of the District and provides opportunities for eating, shopping, and opening new businesses in the District.

- 1. Encourage clusters of local retail at key intersections and promote “design principles for community retail”.
- 2. Encourage the consolidation of parking and promote parking design guidelines to create a comfortable walking environment.
- 3. Continue the development of large scale commercial business along Beltway 8, SH-288 and South Main Street/US-90 A.
- 4. Seek a developer and land assemblage for a “town center” located at a key intersection near Sims Bayou, for example at South Post Oak between West Orem and West Fuqua.



West Orem Drive Linear Park

Priorities for Implementation

1. Apply branding and visibility elements to all major thoroughfares.

- Apply large street signs to traffic lights at each intersection of major thoroughfares or highways:
Estimated Cost: \$65,000 – 75,000 total for 24 intersections
- Apply small street signs at all intersections along major thoroughfares and highways:
Estimated Cost: \$150,000 – 160,000 total for approximately 140 intersections

2. Implement district Gateway Projects, prioritized by volume of traffic and public transportation routes

Priority 1: District Gateways at intersections with a high volume of traffic and major bus routes.

Priority 2: District Gateways at intersections without a major bus route.

Priority 3: District Gateways at intersections where roadway extensions are planned should be completed along with those projects.

Estimated Cost Range: \$350-500,000 per gateway

3. Implement Bayou Access Point projects in Coordination with COH Parks Department and Bayou Greenways Initiative

Improvements to Sims Bayou have been funded as part of the Bayou Greenways project. Construction projects have already begun on several stretches of the Bayou within 5 Corners, and the entire length will be completed within 7 years. Projects that create connections to Sims Bayou should be completed in coordination with the larger Bayou Greenways Initiative to maximize impact and efficiency. Eight projects are suggested, each with a cost range of \$220-350,000.

4. Linear Park Projects:

Linear park projects have been proposed, in the medians of Buffalo Speedway and West Orem Drive, and along the CentrePoint easement adjacent to Hiram Clarke.

Priority 1: Linear Park along the Buffalo Speedway esplanade (West Orem Road to West Fuqua Street)
Estimated Cost Range: \$900,000 to \$1.2 million

Priority 2: Linear Park along the West Orem Road esplanade (Hiram Clarke Road to Buffalo Speedway)
Estimated Cost Range: \$1 – 1.3 million

Priority 3: Linear Park along Centerpoint Easement adjacent to (west of) Hiram Clarke Rd. (Allum Road to Sims Bayou)
Estimated Cost Range: \$1.9 – 2.5 million

Priority 4: Linear Park along the West Orem Road esplanade (Buffalo Speedway to Alameda Road)
Estimated Cost Range: \$1.1 – 1.4 million

5. Key Intersection Projects

The seven suggested Major Intersection sites should be completed last, due to their relative cost and complexity. However, projects may gain increased priority if significant new development is planned in the vicinity. Each Key Intersection is projected to cost \$650-950,000

Tomorrow’s Five Corners District

These recommendations present both short-term and long-term improvements intended to work incrementally towards realizing the District’s vision of being a premier living, shopping, working and recreation area for the City of Houston. By identifying funding from the District, TIRZ, leveraging other local and federal funds, and by suggesting potential partners in the public and private sectors, as well as local business owners and property owners, these recommendations present a real, implementable road map for the District’s future.

INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Design Master Plan presents strategies and recommendations to help the Five Corners District strengthen its identity as a beautiful, safe and attractive place to live, shop, work and invest in. The district is adjacent to three of Houston’s major highways, nearby to major centers of activity and employment, and includes almost half a million acres of parks. With the largest amount of undeveloped land of any area in Houston, the district anticipates and encourages considerable development in the near future.

As a team of landscape architects and urban planners, Asakura Robinson’s role has been to work with community members, business owners and other stakeholders to envision how the district can best create a built environment that enhances the district’s assets as well as anticipates, guides and encourages this future development. The plan includes concepts for new development, mobility, parks and open space, landscaping, and branding. Through engagement efforts, including community meetings, stakeholder workshops, and business surveys, a set of goals was established to guide the master plan development and ensure a well-rounded approach to future improvements by the Five Corners District.

At the district level, this set of recommendations suggests how key places, corridors, open spaces and other assets can be connected to create a sense of identity. Guidelines for new developments and parks ensure that future public projects and new developments consistently support the district’s overall vision. Along with these strategies and guidelines, the Master Plan identifies three types of places within the district where urban design and streetscape projects can have the greatest impact: gateways, key intersections and open space connections. Potential projects are identified and prioritized, and a sample design is given for each type of place using a “kit of parts approach.”

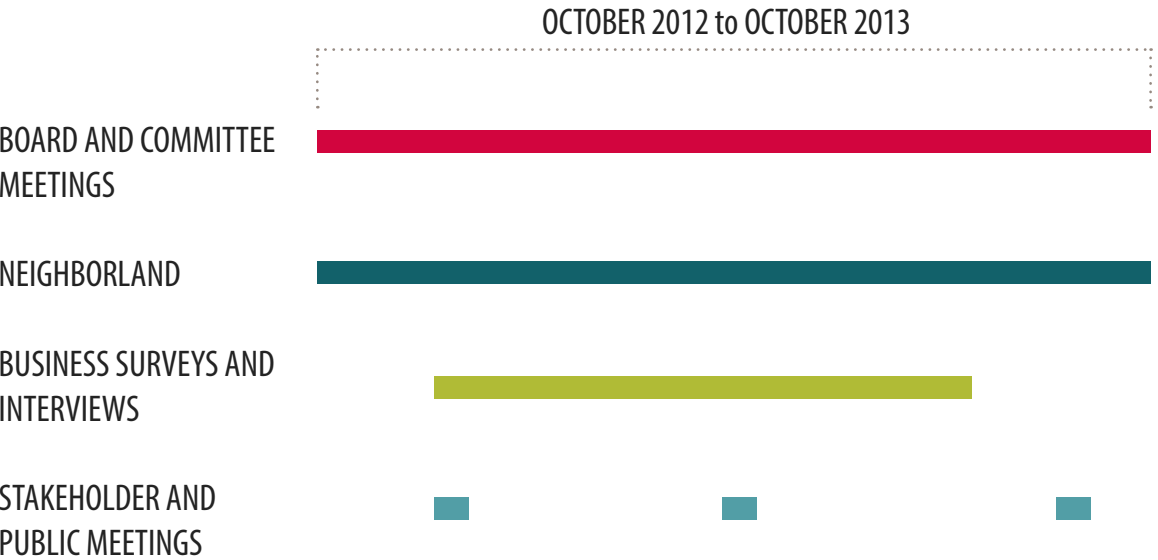
The plan lays out both short-term improvements and a long term vision for commerical growth in the District. As such, projects can be considered investments in creating desirable growth, increased property values, recreation areas, an improved quality of life for community members, a dynamic commercial environment for business owners, and attractive destinations for visitors.

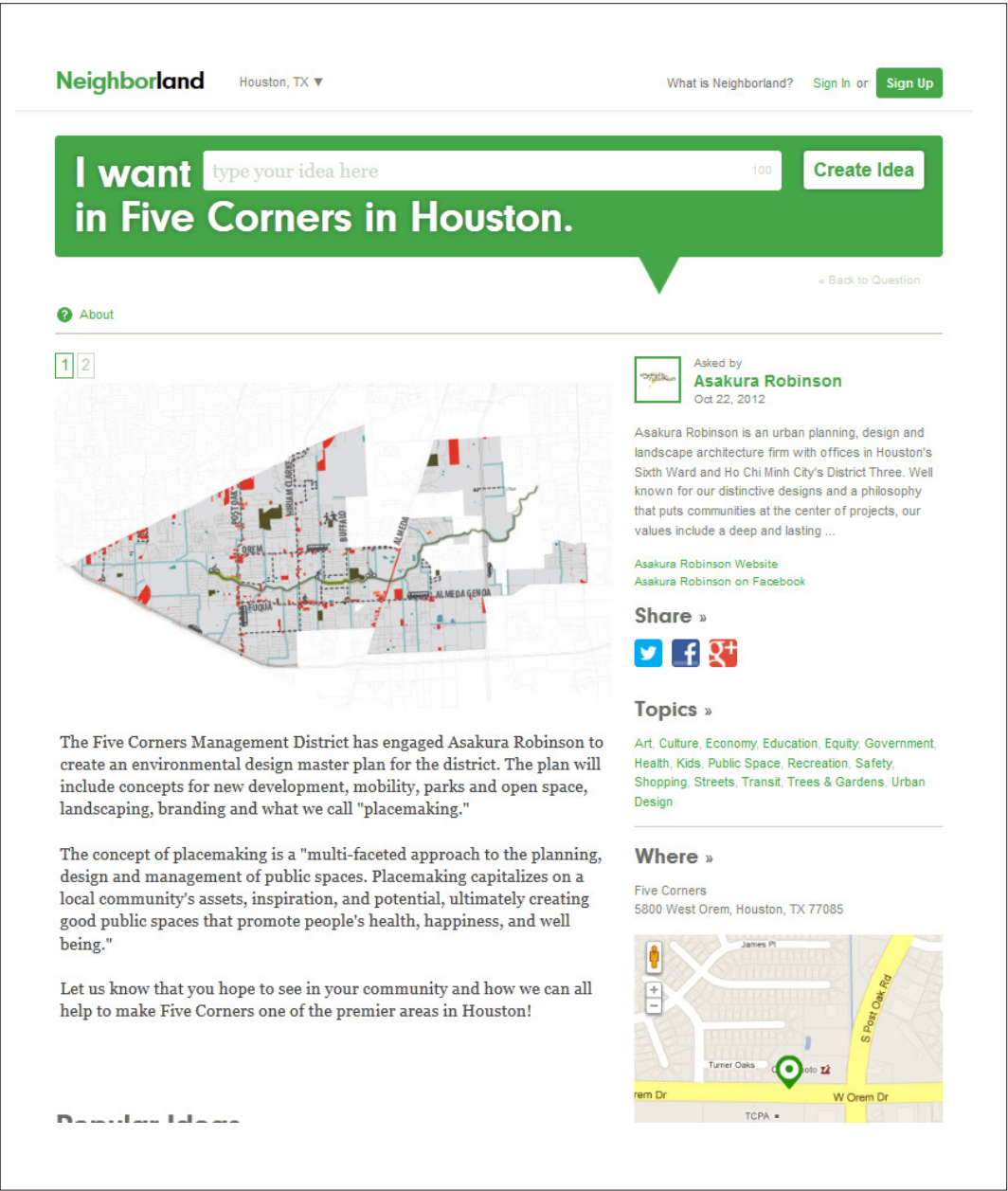
MULTIPLE MODES OF PARTICIPATION

One of the greatest assets of the Five Corners Management District are the residents and business owners that put roots in the community. The District has a strong base of passionate leaders that were leveraged throughout the planning process. Involvement from community leaders is a vital part of developing a comprehensive plan, as they are a constant force that can continue the momentum.

Multiple methods of engagement were utilized to understand the diverse perspectives within the community. By approaching engagement through multiple mediums such as community visioning sessions and charrettes, an online community-sharing platform such as Neighborland, and business surveys, we were able to maximize reach. These methods helped understand the needs and desires of the community better. Additional perspectives were also gained by engaging with the Five Corners Board, the Urban Design subcommittee, elected officials, civic club leaders, and other neighborhood organizations that are already embedded within the community.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE





Screen shot of the online public engagement tool, available at <https://neighborland.com/fivecorners>.



Example of the Business Survey that was distributed across Five Corners District for input.



Images from project Stakeholder Workshop

PROJECT GOALS

GOALS

- 01** Develop an appealing identity for the Five Corners District to help attract investment and partnership with the management district.
- 02** Celebrate and connect district assets by prioritizing projects according to existing area investments and planned growth.
- 03** Promote walking and bicycling through infrastructure and design that can be supported by local organizations and programs.
- 04** Create a vision for future development of commercial, recreational, and civic activity that is to be promoted and supported by the Five Corners District.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Through analysis of existing conditions, interviews with businesses, and conversations with residents, a set of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats were determined. These issues helped establish a set of goals for the Environmental and Urban Design Master Plan and further informed the proposed recommendations.

STRENGTHS

One of the greatest assets of the Five Corners District is Sims Bayou. The Bayou runs right through the middle of the District, creating opportunities for mobility, park space, and increased stormwater management.

A number of community anchors exist within Five Corners, namely the YMCA, Multi-Service Center, a range of parks and places of worship. These assets can be capitalized on more easily as they already draw a large number of people to them and help form the social identity of the District.

Five Corners has three freeways around it and sees large amounts of traffic right around the periphery of the District. While many of the people that are traveling through and around the District aren't familiar with it, there are opportunities for promoting the District's identity at these high-traffic areas.

The District is in close proximity to the Texas Medical Center. This proximity, coupled with lower land prices, make the Five Corners District an attractive residential location for people who work at the Texas Medical Center.

WEAKNESSES

Many of the property owners do not live in the District and therefore, are less engaged in District development. This lack of engagement has led to a lack of upkeep of property.

The changing racial demographics have presented challenges for the District. With a growing hispanic/latino population, the District has not been able to find efficient methods of communication. This becomes a greater challenge, as lack of communication hinders a unified community vision.

Illegal dumping is a common concern within the District. Many areas that seem vacant and lack clear ownership, are often littered with garbage and furniture.

Many residents and business owners of the area are not aware of the presence of the Five Corners Management District and do not identify with the District.

Although the high number of churches in the District attract a lot of visitors, the lack of commercial vibrancy keeps them from spending time in the neighborhood and contributing to the economic vitality of the area

Much of the mobility is limited to automobile. This is due to the fact that aside from the major corridors, streets see little connectivity. Conditions such as high-speed traffic, dilapidated sidewalks and a lack of street trees don't create an atmosphere conducive for walking or biking.

OPPORTUNITIES

Areas within Five Corners District, particularly along South Main Street/US 90A and the planned Buffalo Speedway extension, are sited for a new development, which could potentially bring greater vibrancy and economic growth to the area.

Sims Bayou is already seeing enhancements as part of the Bayou Greenways Initiative. The added trails should be considered as a way to bring more multi-modal mobility into the area.

Until now only a small portion of the District was included within a TIRZ district. However, a new TIRZ district, TIRZ #25, has been designated and could generate funds for many of the improvements recommended in this Plan, especially as the District sees greater economic development.

Several community facilities have been revitalized and are serving as anchors for the community. This includes the Hiram Clarke Multi-Service Center, as well as the new Billy Reagan School. These anchors can be further strengthened.

Two major Centerpoint easements, along Hiram Clarke and West Orem Drive, present opportunities for linear parks. These large swaths of land could be improved aesthetically and functionally to provide options for mobility through the District.

THREATS

The District currently sees high drug activity, particularly in areas where visibility and development is limited. Community members have also stated that many vacant buildings are commonly used for illegal activities such as drug dealings.

Burglaries are a common occurrence at many retail establishments. This lack of security (or perceived lack of security) discourages businesses from investing more money and deters future businesses that may want to come into the neighborhood.

Much of the large-scale retail that is planned for the periphery of the development could potentially affect the neighborhoods within the District. Though this has not been identified as a concern, provisions should be taken to ensure that the character of the District is not compromised by out-of-scale development, which is better suited along highways.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

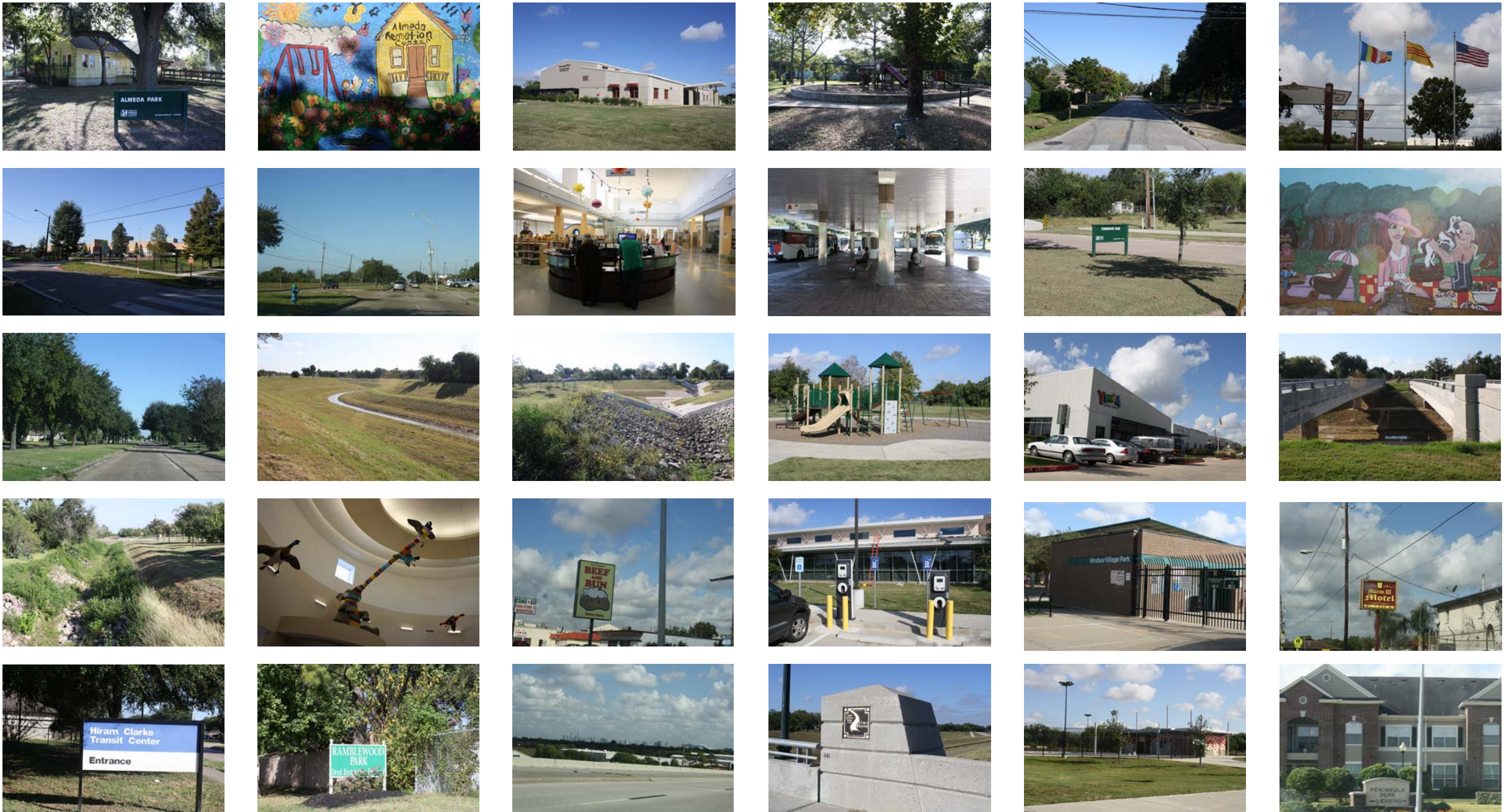
In order to develop a vision for the future, it is first necessary to assess where a community has come from, what its key assets are and what challenges must be overcome. Although it is one of the City of Houston's newest Management Districts, the area now known as Five Corners has a long history which is important to the many community members who have lived and worked in its borders for many, many years. Though the name is new, the community is bound together by this collective history and a desire to make the District a great place to live, work and invest in.

Historically a collection of African-American neighborhoods at the edges of Houston's core, the area retained characteristics of rural, suburban and urban development, making it an extremely unique space. In the past decades, significant growth in neighboring cities further from downtown Houston, namely Pearland, Missouri City and Sugar Land, have created new opportunities and development pressures for the community, which is roughly equidistant from Sugar Land Town Square and Houston's Texas Medical Center, two of the fastest growing destinations for jobs in the whole region. While much of this development has leapfrogged the Five Corners District, there is now significant opportunity for growth. Indeed, the community has more undeveloped land than any other area within Houston's city limits.

The area is bordered by three of Houston's busiest and most important highways. Many people travel along the major thoroughfares that run through the district and connect the area to other parts of western and southern Houston, or travel through the Five Corners District on one of the three highways on their daily commute. While many of these people drive past the district without stopping, they are a significant population that could potentially see 5 Corners as a destination for recreation, shopping and living.

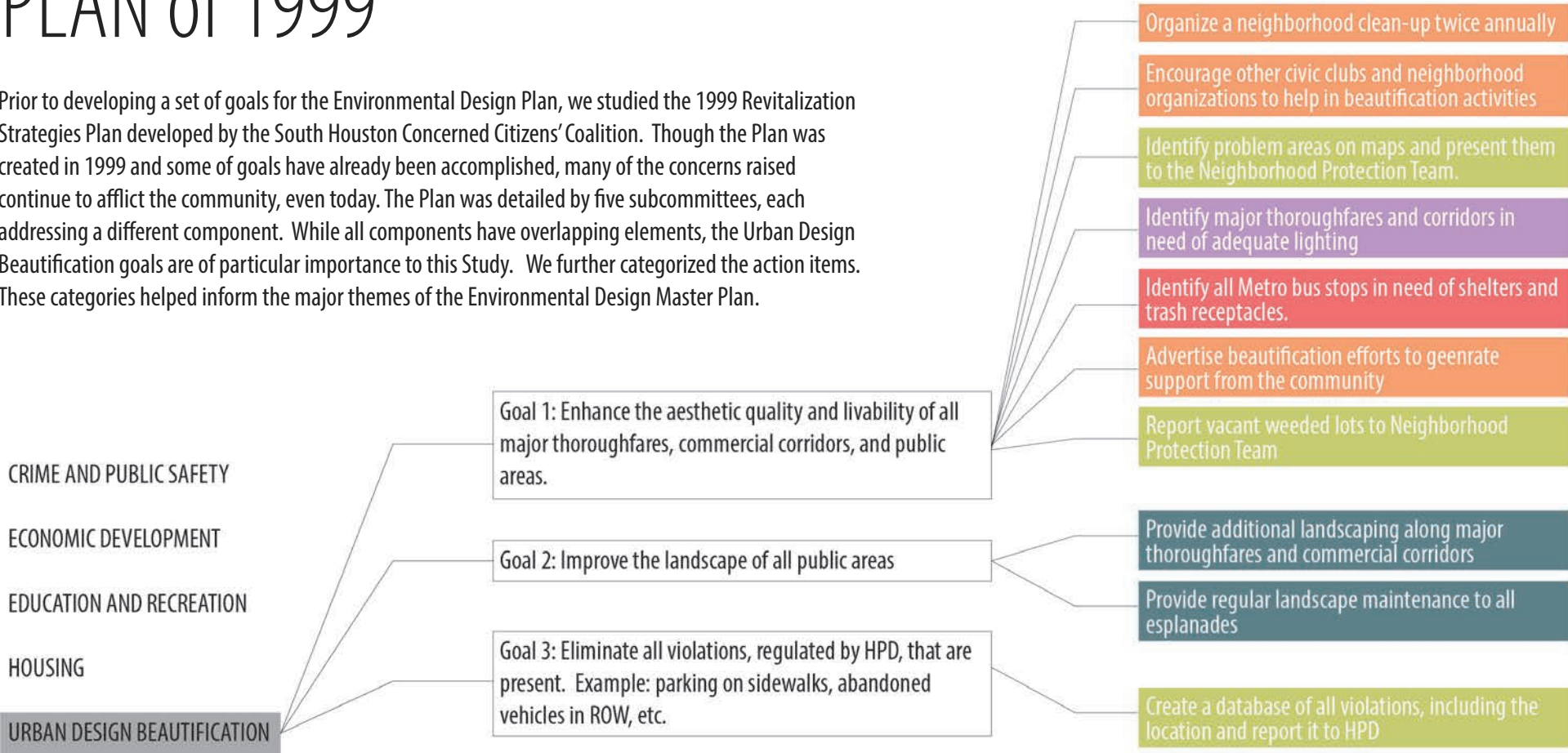
Sims Bayou runs east and west through the center of the District. New projects to improve access and recreational opportunities along the bayou can help realize the potential of the District's primary natural feature.

Today the Five Corners Management District can be said to be at a crossroads. The establishment of the District is the first step in creating a cohesive brand for the area and can prompt many improvements to craft new value for residents, business owners and visitors.



SOUTH HOUSTON CONCERNED CITIZENS' COALITION REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES PLAN of 1999

Prior to developing a set of goals for the Environmental Design Plan, we studied the 1999 Revitalization Strategies Plan developed by the South Houston Concerned Citizens' Coalition. Though the Plan was created in 1999 and some of goals have already been accomplished, many of the concerns raised continue to afflict the community, even today. The Plan was detailed by five subcommittees, each addressing a different component. While all components have overlapping elements, the Urban Design Beautification goals are of particular importance to this Study. We further categorized the action items. These categories helped inform the major themes of the Environmental Design Master Plan.





LAND AREA
Square Miles



FIVE CORNERS



DOWNTOWN HOUSTON



OST/SOUTH UNION



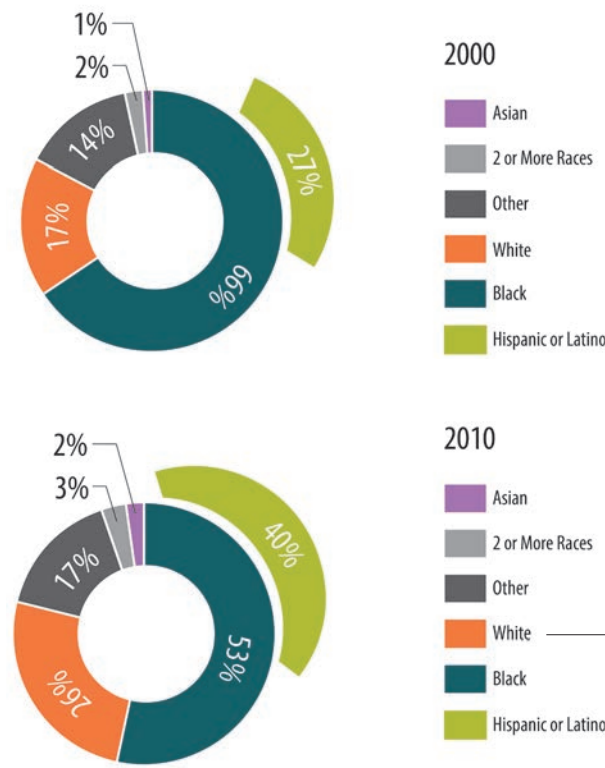
SHARPSTOWN



PEARLAND

RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Source: 2000 and 2010 Census, including some residents outside of study area

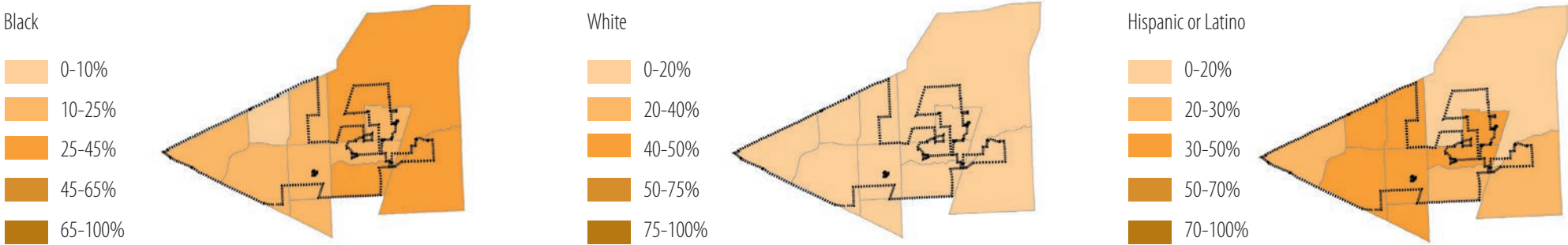


Situated in southern Harris County, the Five Corners Management District has a unique position within the City of Houston. While it is surrounded by a number of landmarks, activity centers and bustling neighborhoods, the District is bound by highways and major thoroughfares, giving it a more quiet and secluded feel. This juxtaposition is further accentuated within the District, as one can witness both busy urban conditions and slower rural uses.

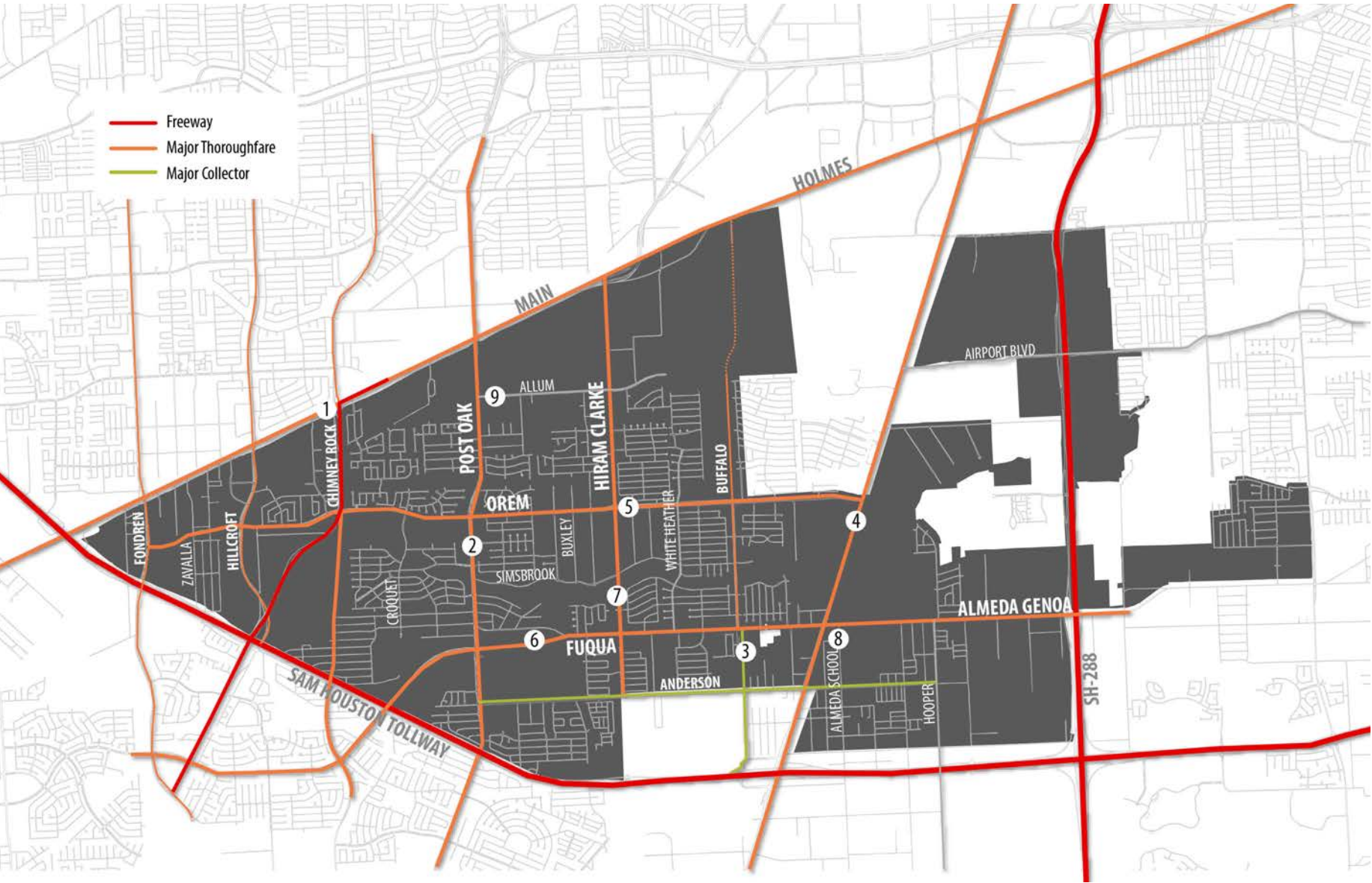
Currently, Five Corners has a number of assets, both built and natural, with many opportunities for future enhancements. However, many community members cite concerns which need to be addressed in order for Five Corners to become a more visible part of the City of Houston. One of the most interesting aspects of the neighborhood is the sheer size of it. Made up of a collection of enclaves, the community is spread out over 24 square miles. The expansive land area makes Five Corners a naturally prominent part of the City, but creates greater challenges for community cohesion and unified character. This has resulted in a varying character throughout the neighborhood.

The demographics within the neighborhood have shifted significantly over the past two decades. African-Americans accounted for a large majority of the population in 2000 and still are the majority. However, the area has seen greater influx of immigrants and Hispanic/Latinos make up the fastest growing part of the population within the District. The White population has also seen notable increase. The dispersion of the races is not as significant; there generally tend to be more Hispanics/Latinos towards the west side of the District, whereas more African Americans are situated on the east side. The white population is not significantly concentrated in any area of the District. If trends continue as they have been, the Five Corners District will be one of the most diverse areas within the City.

RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS BY CENSUS TRACTS

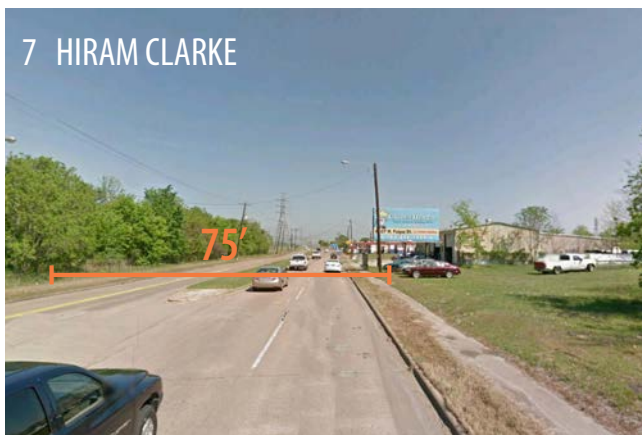
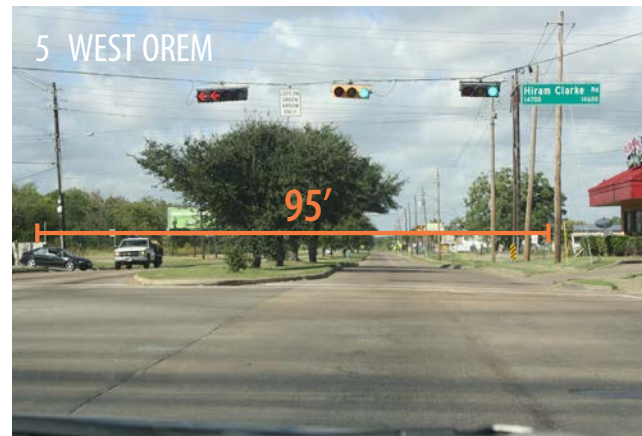
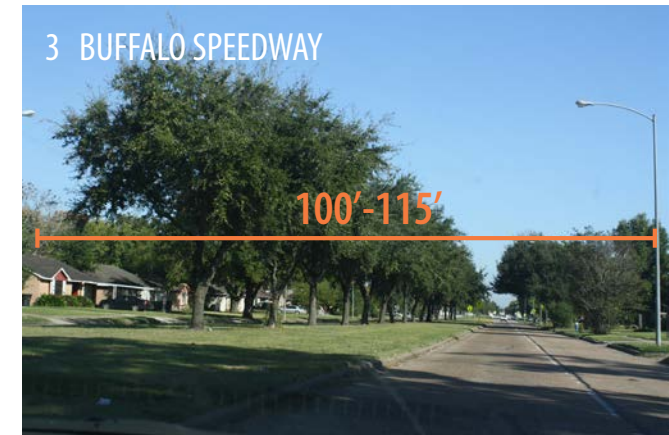


STREET HIERARCHY



The Five Corners District is bounded by freeways, the Sam Houston Tollway and SH-288, on two sides. The Tollway is also the boundary between Harris County and Fort Bend County. The District contains a number of major thoroughfares that enclose smaller neighborhood streets.



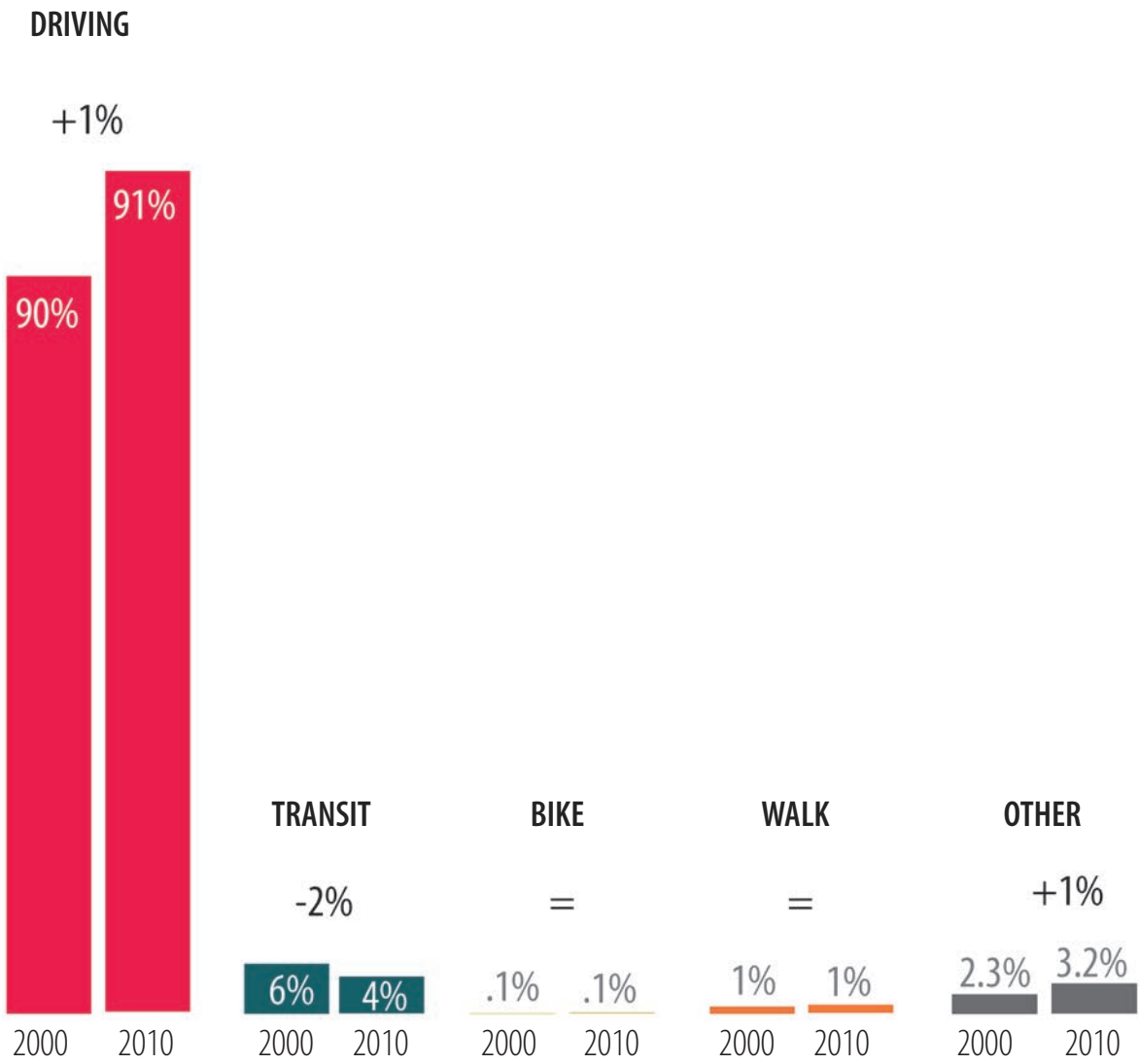


TRAFFIC VOLUME



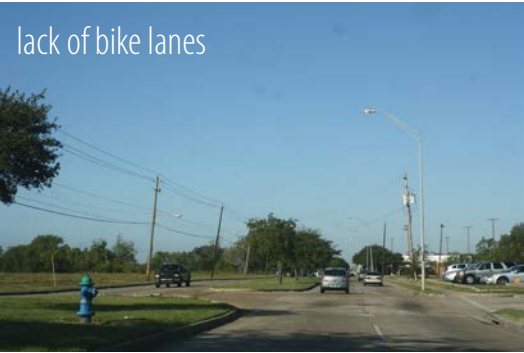
The highest traffic volumes can be seen on the periphery of the District. The major corridors running through the District are generally designed for greater traffic volumes than they currently carry, but there are a few intersections that see a significant number of cars per day. The current infrastructure is overly designed when compared to the number of cars that are actually going through and presents possibilities for redesign. The expected high volume of traffic on the freeways will be significant when considering the areas of high visibility for populations outside the District.

MODE SHARE

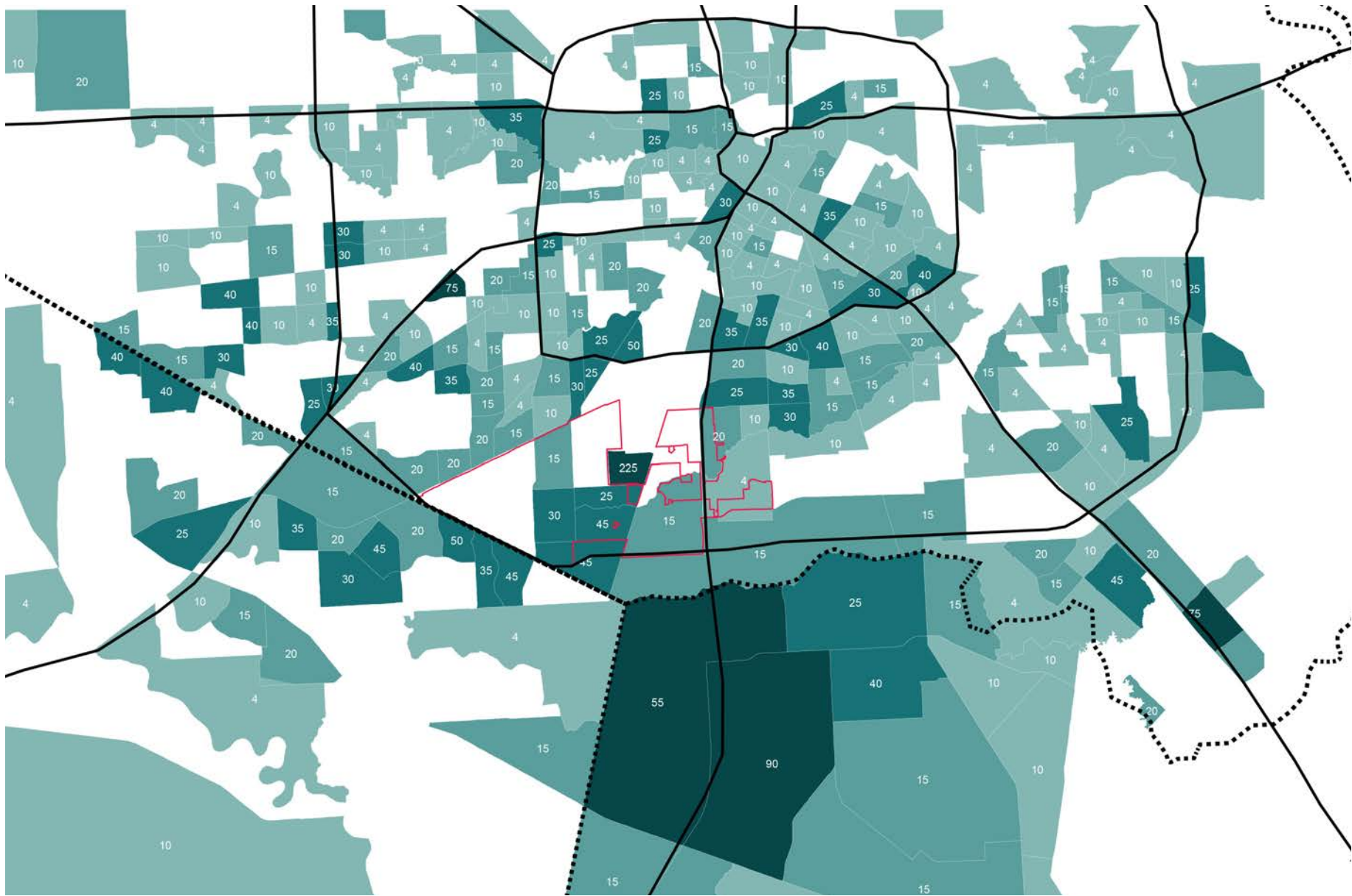


Source: 2000 and 2010 Census, including some residents outside of study area

The mode share data provides insight into the mobility patterns of Five Corners residents. The primary mode of transportation is by automobile, which has remained steady over a decade. Transit ridership has declined and other modes have steadily remained at a very low percentage. This situation is reflected by the infrastructure conditions in Five Corners. Though facilities like bike racks are available at some destinations, infrastructure such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails are not currently conducive to promoting more active transportation, due to a lack of connectivity across the District.



JOURNEY-TO-WORK



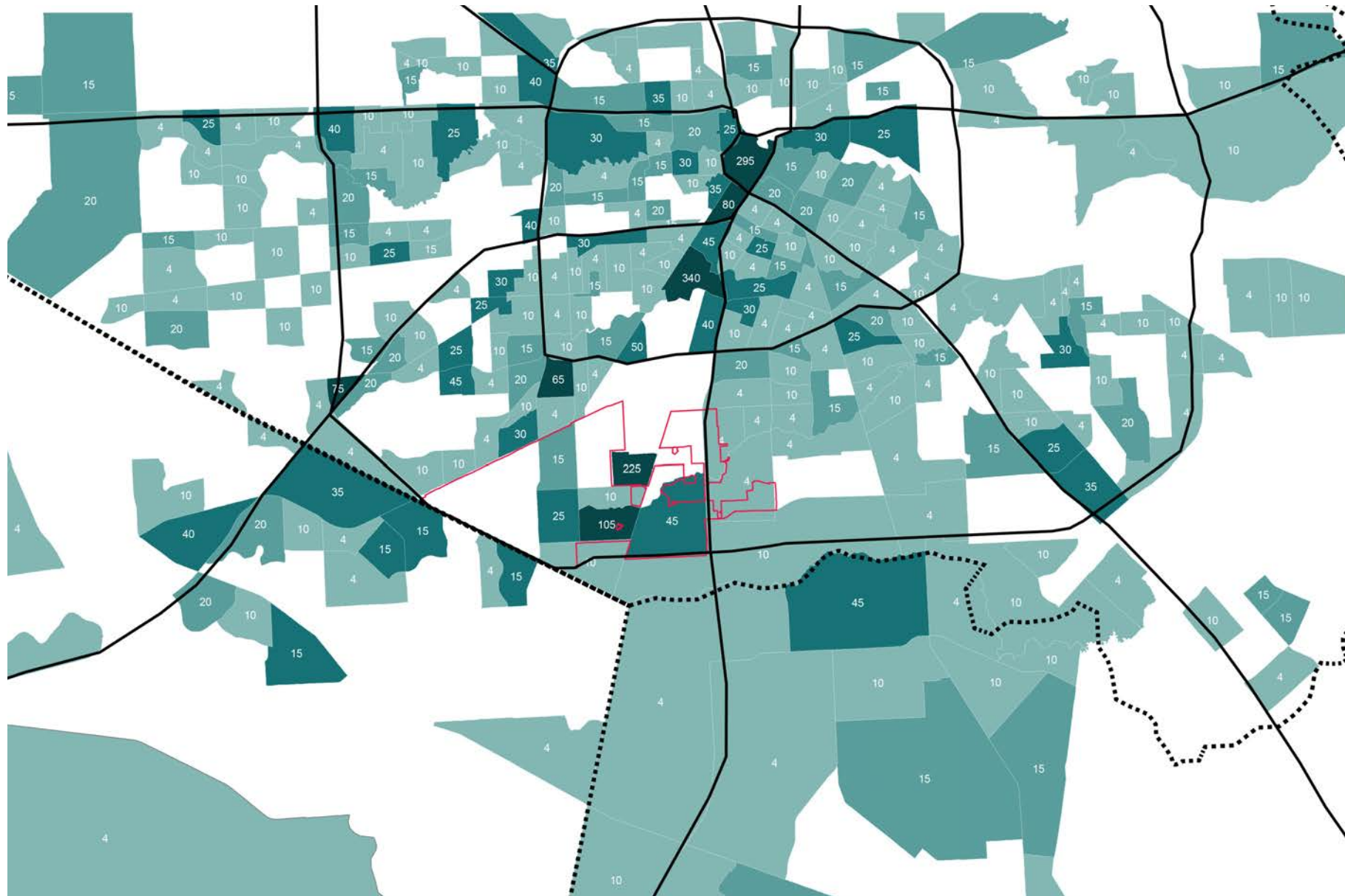
JOURNEY TO WORK:
FOR PEOPLE WITH JOBS IN THE STUDY AREA
Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, based on 2000 Census



TOP RESIDENCES FOR STUDY AREA WORKERS

- 1 Pearland
- 2 Bellaire
- 3 Braeswood

The largely residential character of Five Corners is further illustrated by the journey-to-work data which shows that a larger number of people are commuting outside the District than are coming for work. A great number of people from Pearland have jobs in the study area. However, the largest groups of commuters that live in the District are traveling to the Medical Center and Downtown Houston. Aside from the few top destinations, employment is spread out, not only though Harris County, but Fort Bend and Brazoria County, as well.



JOURNEY TO WORK:

FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN THE STUDY AREA

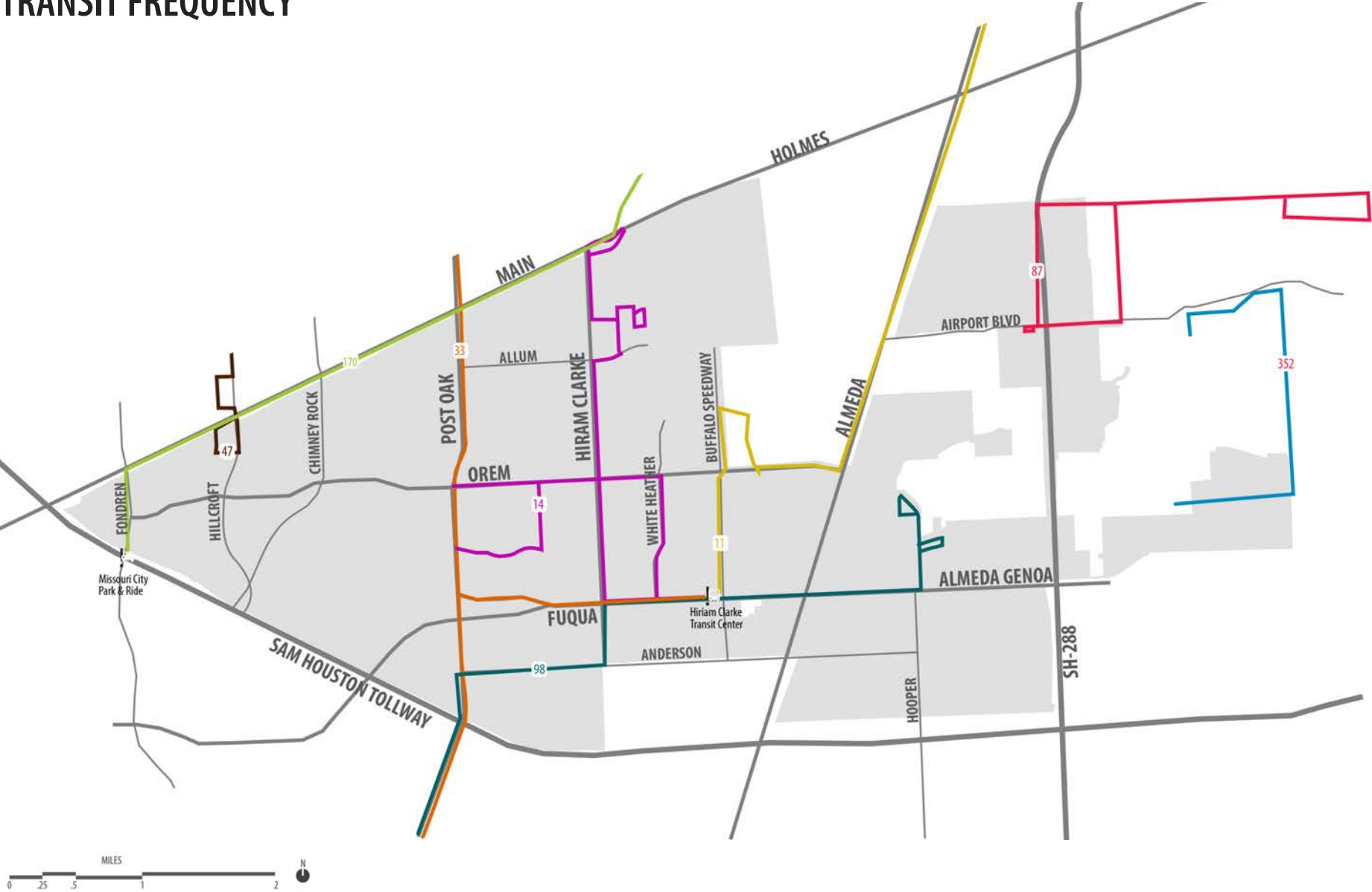
Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, based on 2000 Census



TOP WORK DESTINATIONS

- 1 Texas Medical Center
- 2 Downtown Houston
- 3 Westwood

TRANSIT FREQUENCY



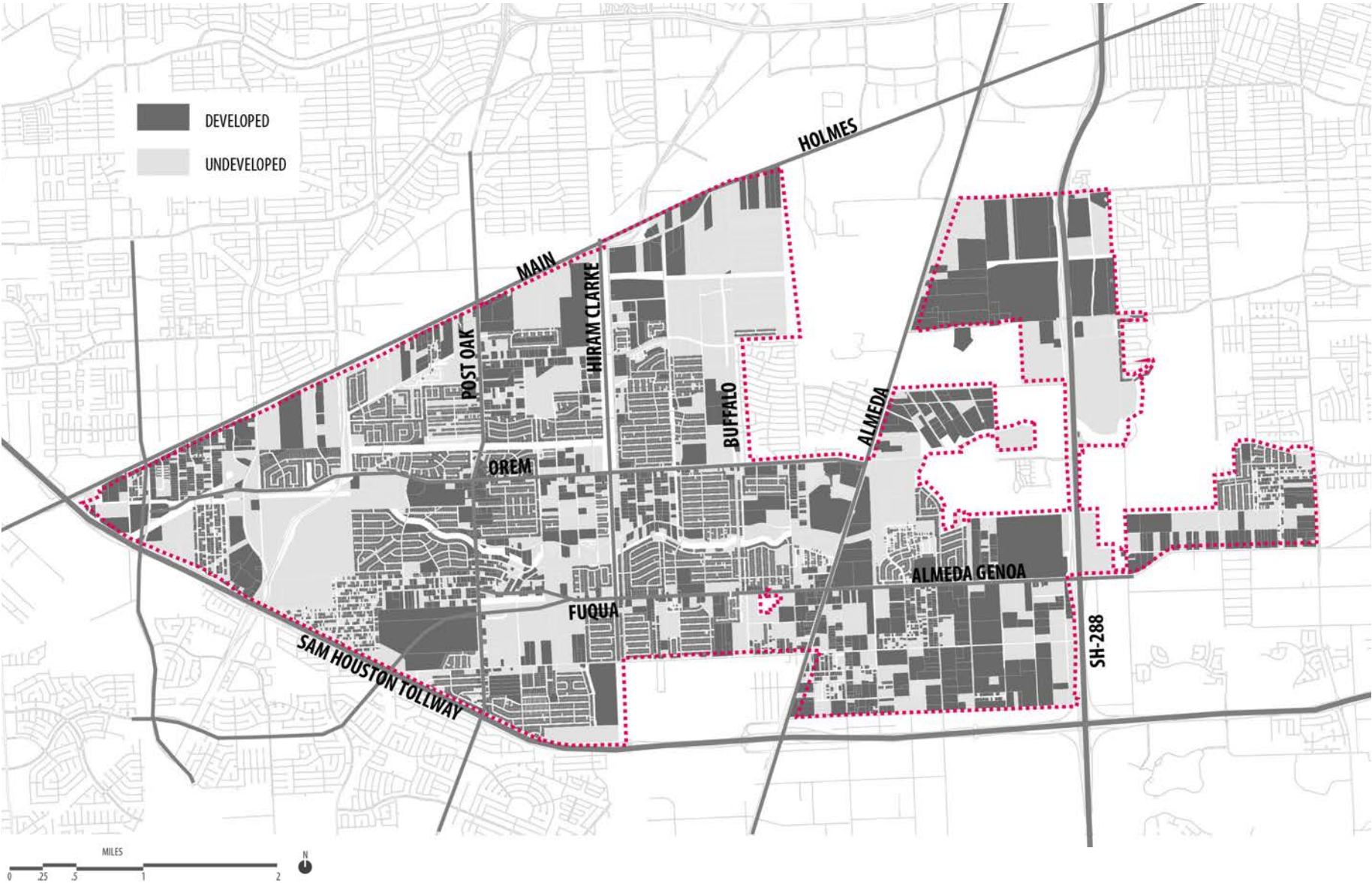
Five Corners has bus routes running along most of its major corridors. Its location at the southern edge of the City also makes it a key connection point for transit routes. The Hiram Clarke Transit Center sits in the middle of the district and sees the connection of four routes, three of which continue outside the District. Five Corners also sits adjacent to part of Fort Bend County, placing the Missouri City Park & Ride on the eastern edge of the District.

TRANSIT FREQUENCY AND RIDERSHIP

Source: Metro, 2010 and 2012 Ridership Reports

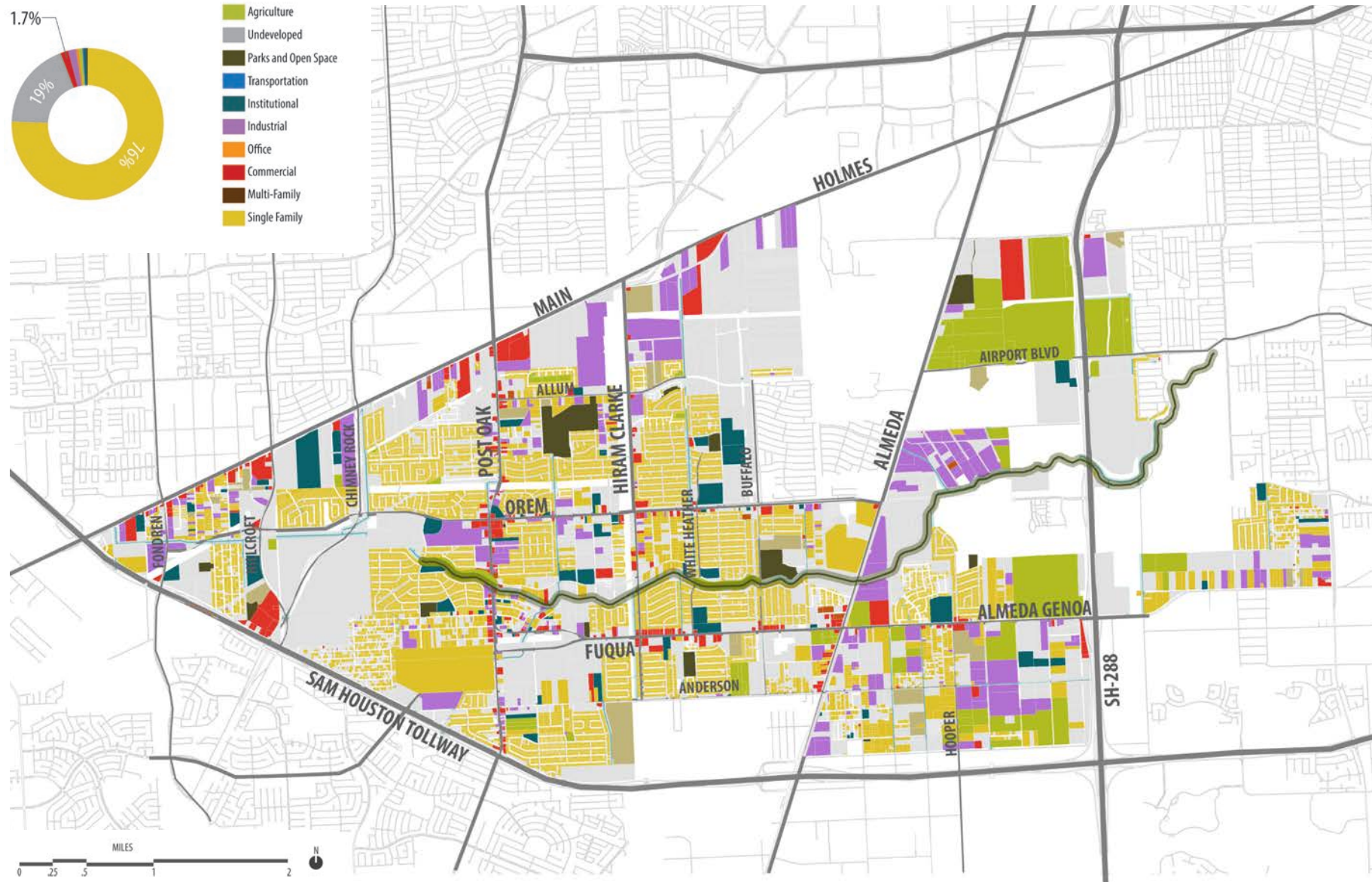
	START OF ROUTE	MORNING	! PEAK MORNING	AFTERNOON/ EVENING	! PEAK EVENING	END OF ROUTE		2010 RIDERSHIP	2012 RIDERSHIP
14	Hiram Clarke Transit Center	29	11	43	9	TMC Transit Center 32 m		2360	2318
170	SH 6 & Knight Rd	36	14	39	22	TMC Transit Center 30 m		443	732
33	Northwest Transit Center	24	8	36	7	Hiram Clarke Transit Center 1 h 4 m		4676	4541
11	Rouse & Walisville	16	3	16	3	Hiram Clarke Transit Center 1 h 17 m		1603	1599
98	Missouri City Park & Ride	14	5	19	5	Chiswick & Canterdale 45 m		549	748
87	TMC Transit Center	16	6	24	5	HCC South Campus 1 h 15 m		2519	2341
47	Hillcroft Transit Center	11	4	16	4	Main & Dunlap 32 m		956	998
352	South Acres & Scott	19	6	15	2	MLK Junior Health Center 11 m		135	208

DEVELOPMENT



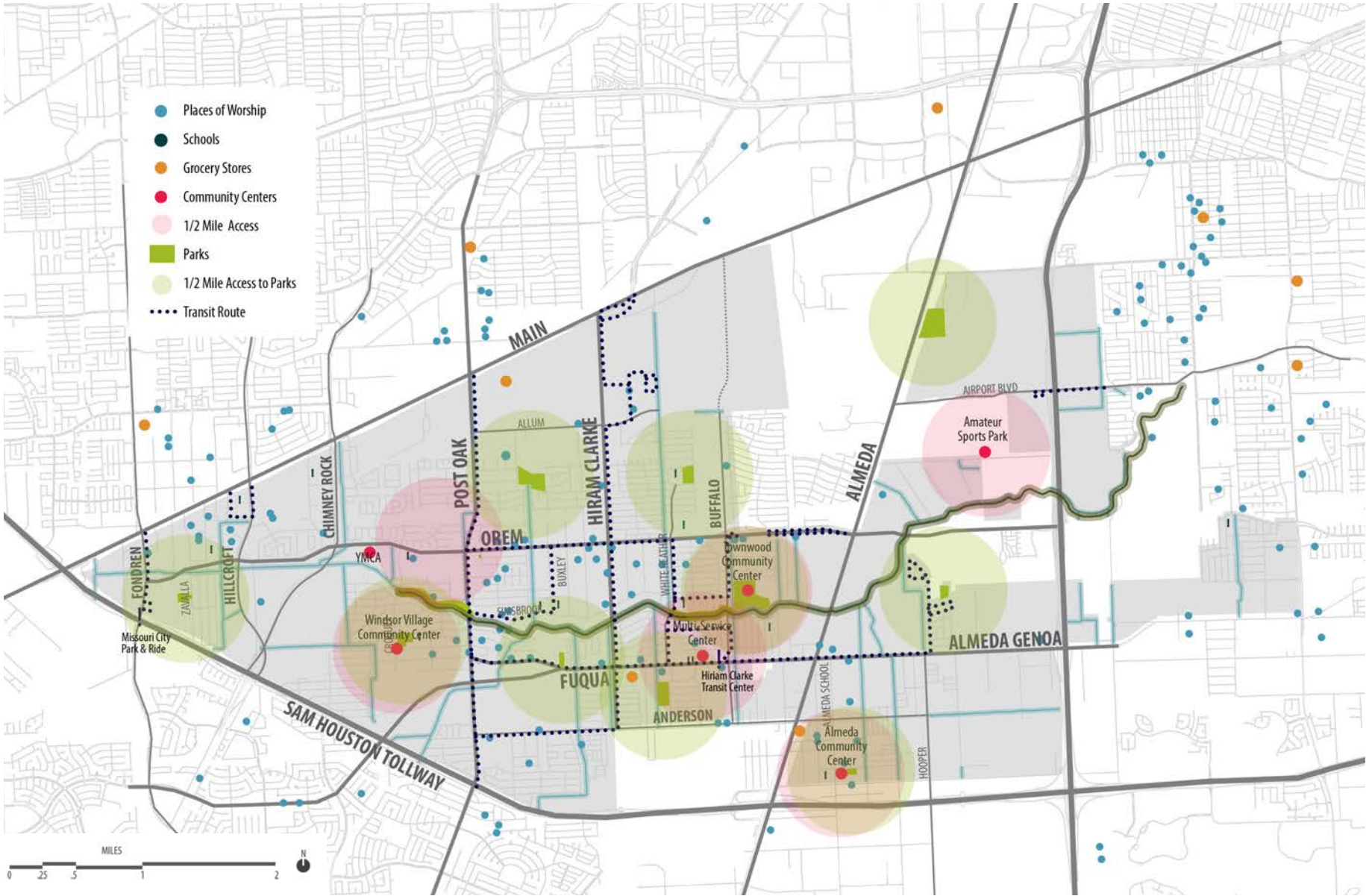
Five Corners has seen large amounts of development over the past decade. However, large parcels of undeveloped land still exist. A challenge posed by large swaths of vacant land is a fragmentation of activity in the district, especially if developments are disconnected, requiring separate trips to reach destinations, and often making it difficult for people traveling by transit, bike, or walking.

LAND USE



Five Corners remains a residential community, with single family homes constituting a large portion of the land area. Historically, the area has had significant industrial uses, remnants of which are still visible today. There are also some agricultural areas within the community and though they don't make up a large portion of the land area, they add to the rural-urban ("rurban") character of Five Corners. The area is also home to a great number of institutions, mostly places of worship.

COMMUNITY ASSETS



Five Corners has a numerous assets that can aid in strengthening its identity. The area’s significant number of places of worship makes it a popular destination for families. Other anchors and highly valued assets include the community centers, parks and bayou trails. The open spaces add great recreational value to the area and provide opportunities for enhanced mobility.



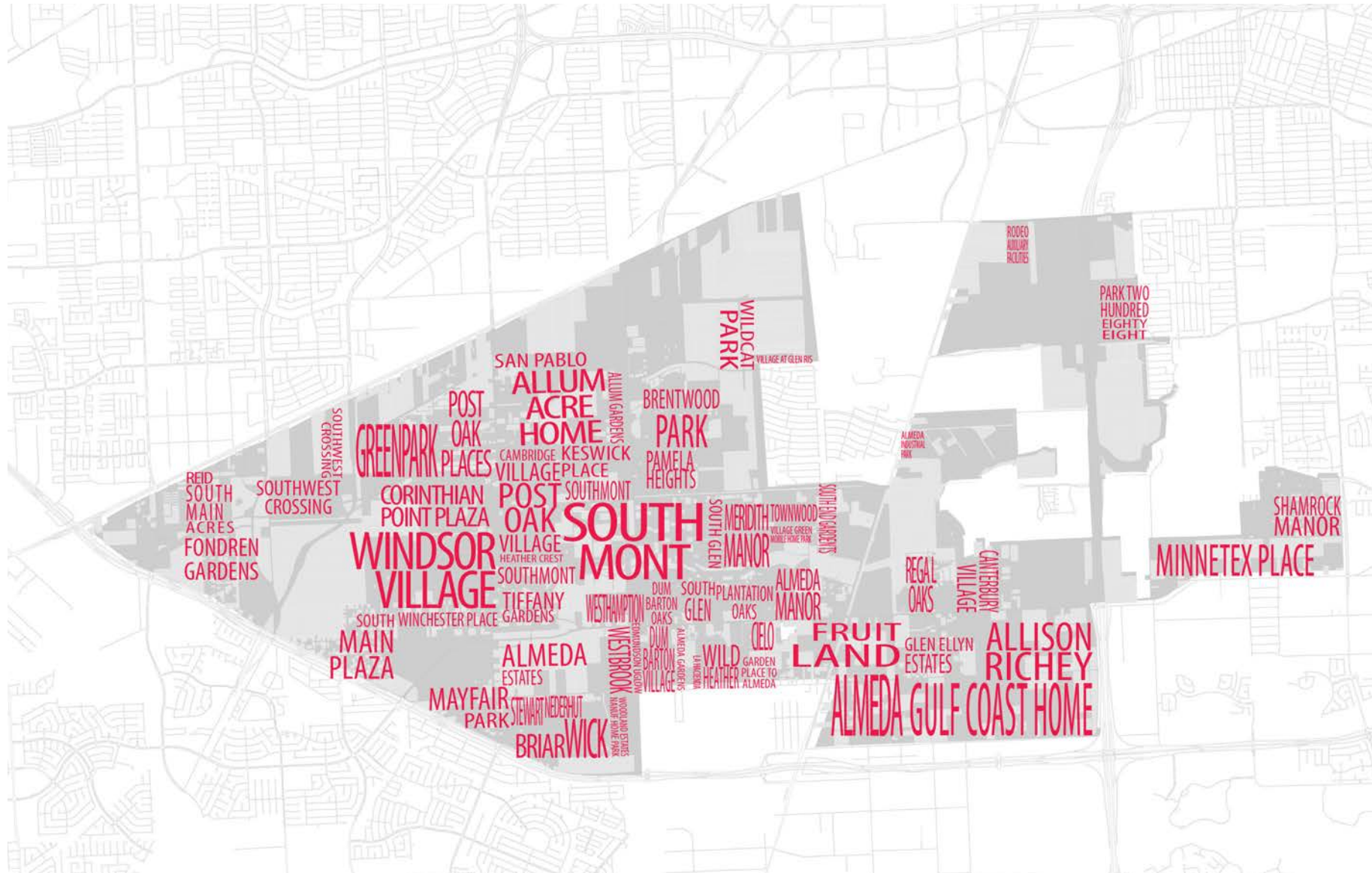
BUSINESS TYPES



Much of the economic activity in the District takes place along the major corridors, namely South Post Oak, Hiram Clark, South Main Street/US 90A, West Orem, West Fuqua, Alameda, and Alameda Genoa. Industrial businesses make up the greatest type of enterprise. There are many retail developments, mostly in the form of strip malls, as well as a many vehicular-related businesses such as auto repair shops. The clustering of economic activity makes some of the intersections prime candidates for streetscape enhancements and new developments.



SUBDIVISIONS



Five Corners District's large land area presents some challenges to creating a cohesive identity, especially as the area is home to numerous subdivisions, many of which feel isolated and are not easily identifiable as one is navigating through the District. However, the enclaves present great opportunities for social programming, as well as opportunities for creating distinct signage.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Visibility and Branding

Targeted Streetscape Improvements

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

Parks and Open Spaces

Street Connectivity

Commercial Development

In order to meet the goals of this study, six categories of recommendations have been developed. The recommendations range from infrastructural improvements to regulatory changes to programs which can be developed by the District. Taken as a whole, these long, medium and short term recommendations provide a pathway to achieve the vision of the Five Corners Management District. The six categories are:

- **Visibility and Branding**

These recommendations promote a unified identity for the community.

- **Targeted Streetscape Improvements**

These recommendations apply the Visibility and Branding recommendations to specific corridors and intersections. These recommendations are crafted as a “kit of parts” which can be applied incrementally as funding allows and customized to fit different contexts while maintaining a consistent feel and aesthetic.

- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Access**

These recommendations will help create opportunities for District residents and visitors to enjoy a wider range of travel options though the District, with the enhancement of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, thus promoting access to the District’s natural features and the availability of more active, health-conscious forms of transportation.

- **Parks and Open Spaces**

These recommendations help shape the natural spaces throughout the District, improve property values, preserve and create new opportunities for recreation.

- **Street Connectivity**

These recommendations promote long term mobility within the District.

- **Commercial Development**

These long-term recommendations seek to attract commercial development that adds to the character of the District and provides opportunities for eating, shopping, and opening new businesses in the District.

Taken together, the implementation of these recommendations provides a pathway to achieve the vision created by the Five Corners Management District.

VISIBILITY AND BRANDING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Create and install Five Corners signature street signage at identified intersections of major corridors and neighborhood streets.
- 2 Create and encourage subdivision developers to utilize signage templates and keep all signage cohesive with the overall branding of the District.
- 3 Create and install directional signs, identifier signs, gateway markers and pavement markers at key points identified on the Targeted Streetscape Improvements map.
- 4 Apply graphic standards to all print and web media produced by the District.

The Five Corners District Environmental and Urban Design Committee reviewed a series of potential logo and branding options created through a collaboration between Asakura Robinson Company and Minor Design. The Committee chose the image below as the district logo, which is to be used on a range of materials, such as the Five Corners District website, letterheads, and identity signage throughout the District.

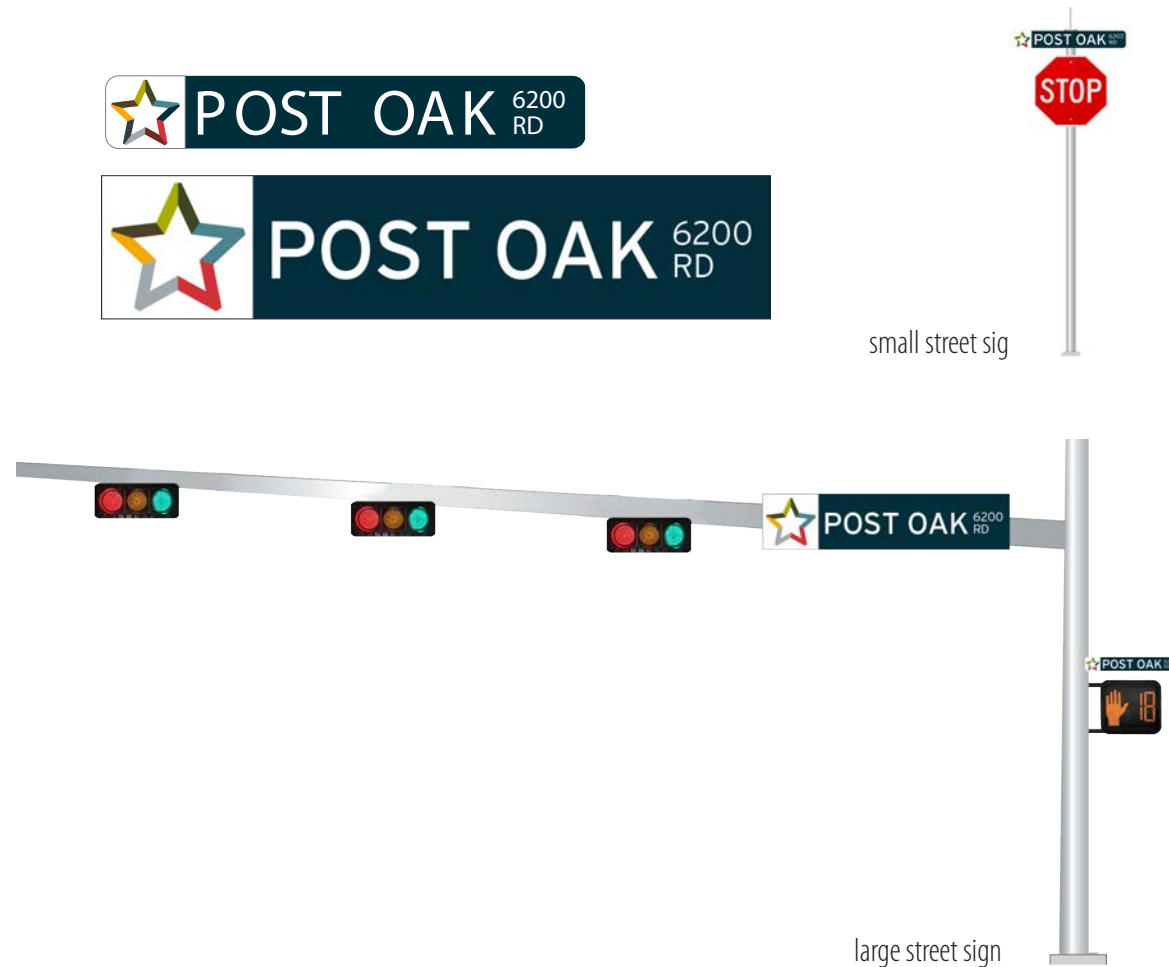
The logo is a key visual identifier for the community. Through its use, the District can be established as the primary identity that residents and businesses associate themselves with in their physical relationship to Houston. Likewise, future investment partners may see the benefits of working in the District, and the amenities it offers. The brand should be applied both in physical applications throughout the district and online. The following Visibility and Branding Recommendations explain how the District’s identity may be established.



Five Corners District logo

1. Create and install Five Corners signature street signage at identified intersections of major corridors and neighborhood streets.

All existing street signage should be replaced at the intersection of major thoroughfares to reinforce the Five Corners identity as people move through the District. The implementation of these are shown in greater detail in the following Recommendation section, Targeted Streetscape Improvements. Small street signs should be placed at all other intersections with a major thoroughfare. Large street signs should be placed at the signalized intersections where major thoroughfares intersect.



2. Encourage new and existing subdivision developers to utilize signage templates and keep all signage cohesive with the overall branding of the District.

Private developers and property managers should coordinate with Five Corners District to receive the rights to display the logo (using approved signage templates or branding plaques) on the subdivision, organization or development signage. This should be encouraged to help reinforce the District identity, especially along major thoroughfares.



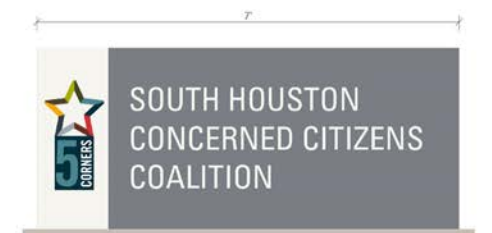
Branding Plates



Branding Plates may be added to new and existing Subdivision Signage



Branding Signs



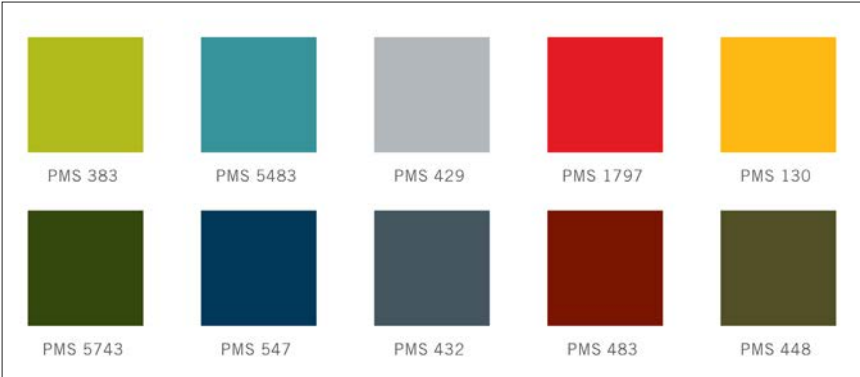
3. Create and install directional signs, identifier signs, gateway markers and pavement markers at key points identified on the Targeted Streetscape Improvements map.

Five Corners District should coordinate with the City of Houston, private property owners, and other entities to install District signage at appropriate locations. Directional signage is geared towards pedestrian and bicyclists and may be installed along trails and at private developments to indicate to direction and distance to prominent destinations. Identifiers and gateway markers serve as another form of branding signage, the first being geared towards pedestrian activity, and the latter being larger to be visible by automobile drivers. Additionally, pavement makers can be installed within the pedestrian refuges of crosswalks, at sidewalk ramps and at the Access Points of the Sims Bayou trail. The implementation of these are shown in greater detail in the Key Intersections (of Targeted Streetscape Improvement) and Sims Bayou Trail Access (of Pedestrian and Bicycle Access) recommendations.



4. Apply graphic standards to all print and web media produced by the District.

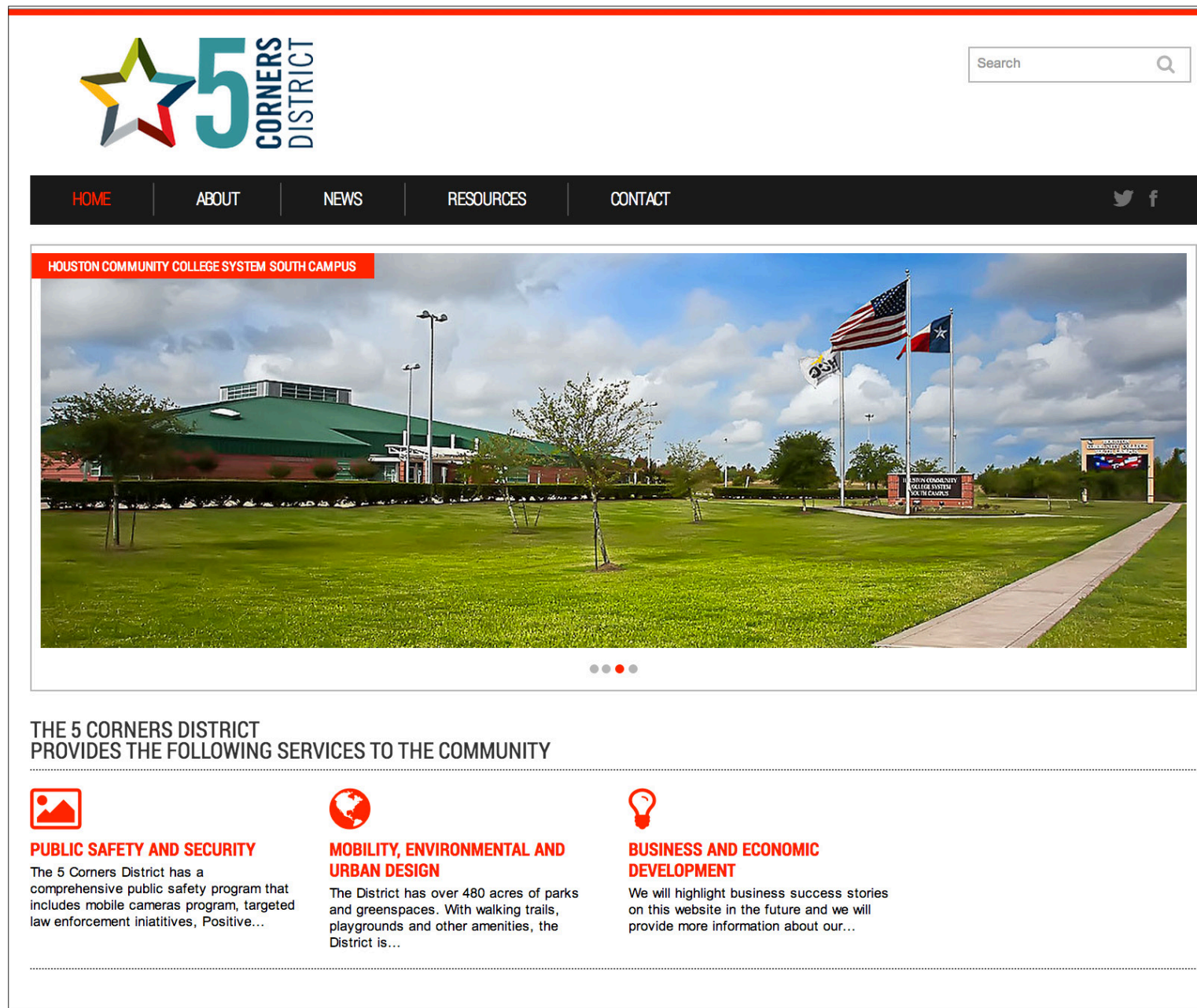
Along with the development of the Five Corners District logo, a color palette and typeface have been established as part of the graphic standards to maintain consistency across materials distributed from the management district. These standards have already been applied to the District's website. Other applications to consider for future use include letterheads, envelopes, business cards, social media presnce and outreach materials.



Color Palette

Typeface:

Trade Gothic Cond. 18	Trade Gothic Cond. 20
abcdefghi jklmnopq rstuvwxyz	abcdefghi jklmnopq rstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGH IJKLMNOP QRSTUVWXYZ	ABCDEFGH IJKLMNOP QRSTUVWXYZ



Screen shot of Five Corners website with the application of proposed graphic standards

TARGETED STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1
- Designate the points where major thoroughfares cross into Five Corners as “District Gateways.”
- 2
- Highlight “Key Intersections” within the District and create a quality public realm for businesses and residents.

Carefully targeted streetscape projects have the potential to create focal points of activity, guide development and strengthen the identity of the Five Corners District. These recommendations are crafted as a “kit of parts” which can be applied incrementally as funding allows and customized to fit different contexts and functions. Two different types of places within the district have been highlighted where urban design and infrastructure projects can have the greatest impact: gateways and key intersections. For each of these, a sample plan and kit of parts has been designed, and a rendering is presented to give an impression of how each type of project may look.

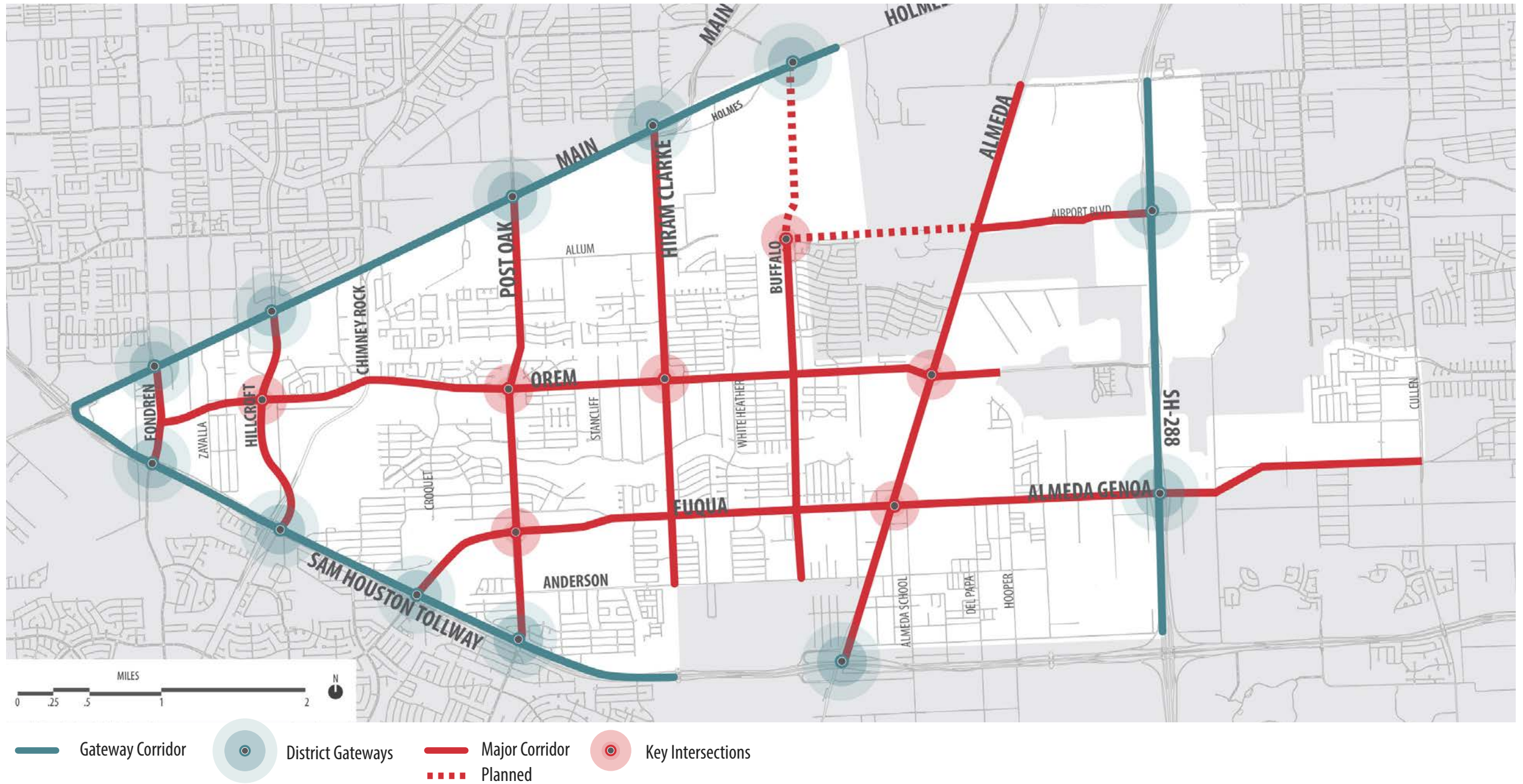
1. **Designate the points where major thoroughfares cross into Five Corners as “District Gateways.”**

Many people travel along the major thoroughfares that run through the district and connect the area to other parts of western and southern Houston, or travel through the Five Corners District on one of the three highways on their daily commute. District Gateways are the key entry points to the district along these major highways and thoroughfares. Improvements at these intersections can play an important role in branding the community for those coming from outside, as well as creating a stronger sense of identity and belonging for those living within the district’s boundaries. All corridor streetscape improvements are here presented as a “kit of parts” which allows for incremental improvements based on funding availability and adaptation to different sites while maintaining a consistent aesthetic.

As most of the district gateways are located at the intersections of highways and major thoroughfares, they are designed to be highly visible and experienced from the perspective of an automobile driver or bus passenger. For many visitors, the gateway improvements will be the introduction to the community: an indication that they are in a district with a distinct identity.

The gateways are designed to include large branded markers, visible from a highway overpass as well as ground level, a color palette for highway pillars based on the Five Corners logo, and signature lighting to ensure that the gateway is visible at night. Within the district’s boundaries, the medians and sidewalks leading from the gateway receive special landscaping treatment to underscore the impression that the driver has entered a distinct and different place.

TARGETED STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

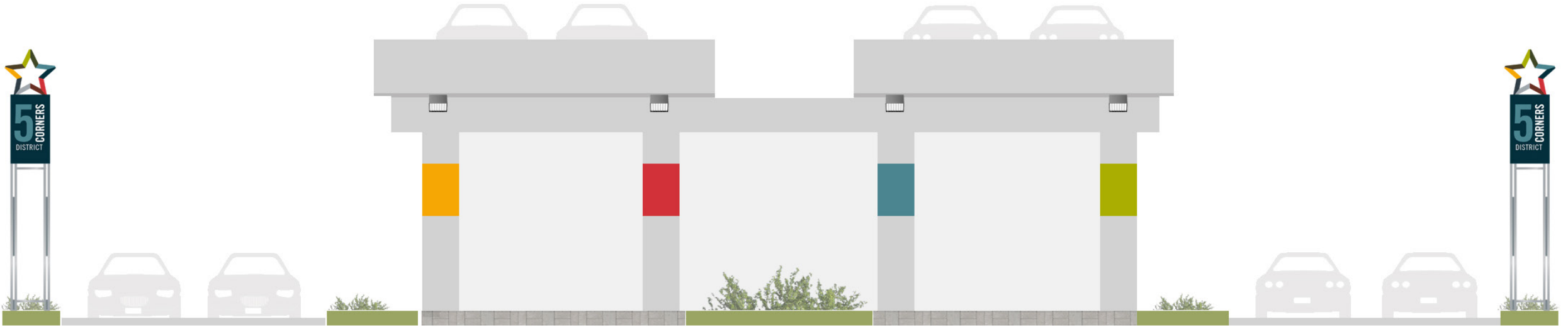


DISTRICT GATEWAYS








Gateway at Hillcroft and South Main St

District Gateways are the key entry points to the district. Improvements at these intersections play an important role in branding the community for those coming from outside. As the community is surrounded by major highways on all sides, the improvements at the gateways are designed to be experienced at higher speeds. For many visitors, the gateway improvements will be the introduction to the community. All corridor streetscape improvements are here presented as a “kit of parts” which allows incremental improvements based on funding availability, and adoption to different sites while maintaining a consistent aesthetic.



Gateway at South Post Oak and South Main Street/US 90A

KIT OF PARTS: DISTRICT GATEWAYS

<p>Color Palette for freeway column painting that pulls from the Five Corners District logo</p> 	<p>Gateway Markers that are tall and visible from an automobile, as well as from free way overpasses</p> 	<p>Landscaping in medians along identified gateways can include clusters of trees, colorful planting (ground cover), and grass turf</p> 	<p>Lighting in the underpass calls attention to the gateway elements, and may even be a main feature with white or colored lighting</p> 	<p>Public Art can play a major role in affirming the District's identity. Monumental pieces may be placed in wide medians</p> 
..... \$30,000 - \$50,000		\$150,000 - \$250,000 \$50,000 - \$100,000
..... \$100,000 - \$250,000				



Public Art Reference Images

2. **Highlight “Key Intersections” within the District and create a quality public realm for businesses and residents.**

While district gateways mark the boundaries of the district, key intersections provide a sense of gravity and define the district’s identity. The intersections of major streets, such as South Post Oak and West Orem, are places that shops and other businesses will gravitate to as Five Corners continues to experience dramatic growth, and are envisioned as points of orientation as well as destinations for shopping, business, and entertainment.

The key intersections are designed to create a safe and engaging environment for pedestrians, an attractive location for new and expanding businesses, and a destination point for those traveling by car or public transit. Pedestrian lighting and lush landscaping along both the medians and sidewalks for two blocks around each intersection will create a distinct impression for both pedestrians and drivers. Signature plaques and street signs will reinforce the identity of the management district as a key driver of activity, and directional signs will highlight businesses, civic centers and other important destinations nearby the intersection. Finally, standards for sidewalks and crosswalks, and connections with Sims Bayou, will create a safe, comfortable place for visitors and residents to walk and bike.

While some of these intersections may become more significant than others, each has the potential to become a lively neighborhood center, with local shops, restaurants and businesses. Perhaps one or two may even be designated as town centers: larger destinations that attract visitors from all over the city. The improvements suggested for these key intersections will help to attract these enterprises and coordinate new development and public investments to create new places for the district, its residents and its businesses.

Street Trees



Bald Cypress



Mexican Oak



Mexican Sycamore



Nuttall Oak

Shrubs and Groundcover



Dietes



Gulf Coast Muhly



Katy Ruellia



Knockout Roses

Flowering Trees



Crape Myrtle



Fringe Tree



Redbud Tree



Saucer Magnolia

Median Trees



Chinese Pistache



Crape Myrtle



Little Gem Magnolia

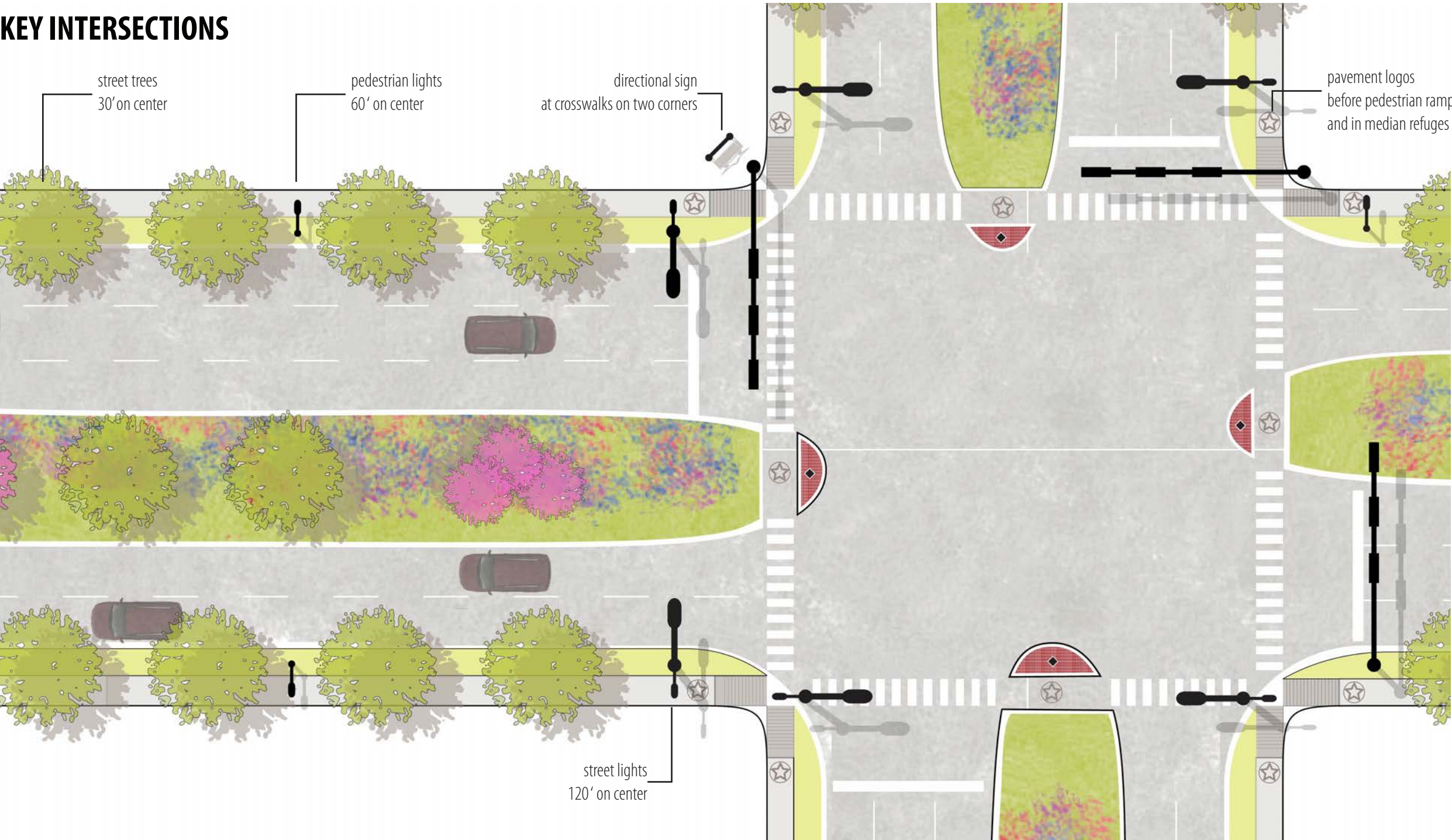


Redbud Tree

KEY INTERSECTIONS



KEY INTERSECTIONS





KIT OF PARTS: Key Intersections

Median Landscaping
in the first two esplanades
of key intersections in each
direction with street trees
shrubs, and colorful ground
cover

Street Trees in the
pedestrian realm provide
shade



**Pedestrian
Lighting**
that improves
safety at
night, and
creates a
welcoming
environment
for evening
activity



**Illuminated
Bollards** can
be installed
at pedestrian
safety zones,
adjacent to the
crossing



Identifiers at
key intersections
ensure their
visibility from
passersby and
retail shoppers.
Property owners
may place
them at their
establishments



**Pavement
Markers** set
into sidewalk



Larger **Street Signs** are
posted on the traffic signals of
major intersections.

Smaller street
signs are posted
above stop
signs, or above
pedestrian
crossing signals.

Crosswalks
with
continental
striping
across major
intersections

**Pedestrian
Signalized
Crossings** may
be installed at
either end of the
crosswalk, and
in the median at
the pedestrian
refuge

Pavers built
into sidewalk
infrastructure
at plazas or
pedestrian
crossings

**Site
furnishings**
may include
trash
receptacles,
bike racks and
benches for
public use



PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ACCESS

- 1 Reduce residents’ reliance on the automobile by connecting neighborhoods to work, school, transit, retail, community destinations and recreational amenities through a trail system.
- 2 Develop safe and seamless connection between trails, sidewalks and bike routes for pedestrians and bicyclists to access destinations.
- 3 Initiate a District-wide “Safe Routes to Schools” program to support schools that are interested in participating.

By building infrastructure for non-motorized transportation, walking and bicycling, people can connect to transit facilities and area destinations in a system that considers needs, such as reasonable distances, safe infrastructure, adequate amenities, and comfortable environments. Sims Bayou is an asset within Five Corners District that has the potential to enhance the overall mobility of residents, and improve their access to recreational amenities, area and city-wide destinations. A connected trail system that links to primary and secondary roadways is essential to fostering a healthy, active community, while promoting equitable transportation options for residents, where people of all ages, income levels, and physical abilities become linked to a safe network of well-maintained pathways.

1. **Reduce residents’ reliance on the automobile by connecting neighborhoods to work, school, transit, retail, community destinations and recreational amenities through a trail system.**

The incorporation of pedestrian and bicycle facilities on existing roadways or their extension from cul-de-sac termini provides the opportunity to easily connect neighborhood residents to area destinations and the greater Houston bayou network. Signage at trail entrances helps users orient themselves on the trail. The most basic feature should be street signs (indicating street names) as the trail intersects with roadway. Creating a map that indicates transit routes, METRO facilities, neighborhoods, schools, parks, etc is another way to help people navigate and encourage them to use the trails. Neighborhood developments may consider incorporating signage that faces the trail. Trail entrances off of a major corridor invites the general public to enter the system. Neighborhood entrances may appeal to families, allowing children and teens to access the trails without having to walk or bike along high-traffic streets. Highlighting METRO transit routes and facilities in relation to the Sim Bayou trails expand residents’ transportation reach in the region. If they can access the Missouri City Park & Ride Lot (west end of Five Corners, off of Fondren) or Hiram Clarke Transit Center (south of the bayou on Buffalo Speedway) efficiently through walking and biking, they may chose to incorporate the trail system in the regular commuting or traveling options. Additionally, the bayou intersects major transit corridors: bus routes 33 (along South Post Oak), 14 (along Hiram Clarke and White Heather).

2. **Develop safe and seamless connection between trails, sidewalks and bike routes for pedestrians and bicyclists to access destinations.**

The Bayou Greenways Initiative has the potential to greatly impact the way people move through and connect to Five Corners District. To date, there are two existing segments of the Sims Bayou trail: (1) Croquet St to S. Post Oak on the west and (2) Scott St to Martin Luther King Jr Blvd on the east. The eastern segment is outside of the district, but can connect Five Corners to significant destinations, such as Texas Southern University and the University of Houston.

Future connections should be made at the following segments (west to east):

- The Storm Water Detention Facility to Croquet St: Proposed Unfunded
- Croquet St to S. Post Oak (0.6 mile, asphalt trail): Existing
- S. Post Oak to I-45 (10-ft wide concrete trail): Proposed Funded Joint project between the US Army Corps. of Engineers, City of Houston, and Houston Parks Board
- Scott St to MLK Blvd (2 miles, asphalt trail): Existing

Roadways with existing or proposed bicycle facilities that intersect Sims Bayou should be prioritized for access: South Post Oak, White Heather, and Buffalo Speedway. Drainage corridors also provide safe connections with north-south extensions, such as the waterway aligned with Labrador Drive, east of Alameda. Constructing Sims Bayou trails between Alameda and Fondren with north-south bikeways and well-maintained sidewalks, connects neighborhoods within Five Corners. Considering the plans to connect all bayous with trails in Houston, extending the trail system east of Alameda will link Five Corners to greater Houston, where an increase in bicyclists will have access to the District, and be able to explore area amenities.

EXTEND EXISTING SIMS BAYOU TRAIL:

The following segments along Sims Bayou are gaps in the trail system that would otherwise provide useful connections for pedestrians and bicyclists, where these facilities become useful for both recreation and transportation, connecting residential developments to parks, transit, and area destinations.

1. Croquet St, east to Hillcroft — Connections to Fountain of Praise, Home Depot, Crossings at Hillcroft
2. Hillcroft, east to Fondren — Connection to Missouri City Park & Ride
3. South Post Oak, west to Buffalo Speedway
4. Buffalo Speedway, west to Scott Street

ROADWAY EXTENSIONS CONNECTING TO SIMS BAYOU TRAIL:

Major intersections cross over Sims Bayou, which are potential access points to the trail. However, smaller street connections are essential to make the trail system a safe option for children and families, such as:

1. Stancliff Street — Connection to Dowling Middle School
2. Kirby Dr, east of Alameda — Connecting neighborhood to the south, Houston Amateur Sports Park to the north

Similarly, neighborhood streets allow bicyclists to avoid roadways with heavy automobile traffic. Currently, there are gaps in neighborhood subdivision roadway networks that could be improved with simple connections:

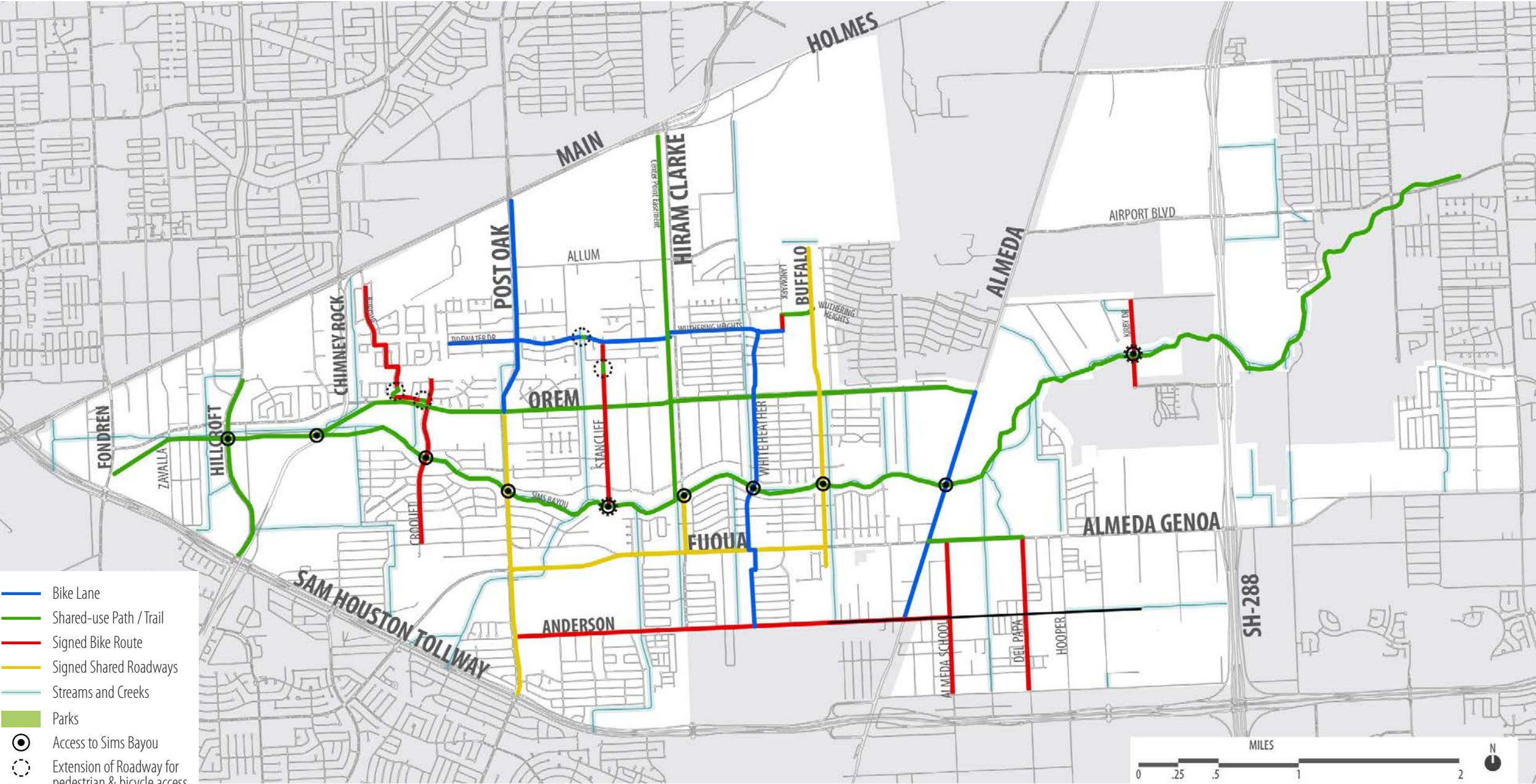
3. Bethune Way to Majestic Lane
4. Majestic Lane to Nat Turner Way
5. Tidewater Drive, east of Candleshade Lane — Bridge over drainage corridor
6. Stancliff Street — Connect north and south segments, intersected by CenterPoint utility easement

DRAINAGE CORRIDOR AND CENTER POINT TRAIL EASEMENTS:

There is an abundance of underutilized corridors in Five Corners District that are currently designated for a single purpose, such as the drainage corridors and utility easements. Drainage corridors that are wide enough for a shared-use path, or hike and bike trail, may be used as an extension of the Sims Bayou Trails. Additionally, a bill was passed in the Texas Senate this year that would reduce the liability of CenterPoint within their easement to those caused by “willful or wanton acts or gross negligence.” This presents the opportunity for high quality hike and bike trails that connect to the roadway network and trail system. Potential trails in Five Corners District include the following:

1. Along Hiram Clark — CenterPoint utility easement
2. Drainage corridor aligned with Labrador Dr, east of Alameda

PROPOSED BICYCLE NETWORK





Bike Lane
Photograph: District Department of Transportation

Bike Lanes designate roadway space for bicyclists marked by text (“Bike Lane”), symbol, and/or arrow markings, and are delineated by a solid white line -- dashed where travel modes may intersect, such as turning lanes. Bicyclists can comfortably ride between the gutter and adjacent traffic lanes with a width of 4 feet (minimum), 6 feet (recommended) and up to 12 ft to be shared with parking.



Shared-use Path, Heights Bike Trail, Houston, TX
Photograph : Wolfgang Houston, Panoramio.com

Shared-use Path / Trails are a pedestrian and bicycle paths that are separated from automobile traffic -- by being raised, curb-separated, or by providing an alternate route. Paths may provide bi-directional lanes (at least 5 feet wide) shared by pedestrians and bicyclists (10 feet total), or bi-directional bicycle lanes alongside a walking path (requiring approximately 15 feet).



Cycle Track on Bluebonnet Lane, Austin, TX
Photograph : Green Lane Project, peopleforbikes.org

Cycle Tracks are protected bike lanes, where bicycle flow is separated from automobile traffic with a physical barrier, which may be a curb, planters, or flexible bollards (as shown on the left). A bi-directional cycle track, similar to the one shown to the left, may be appropriate on White Heather Drive to connect area residents to the schools. The one shown in the image has a 2-foot painted buffer with flexible bollards, as well as green paint at driveway to alert driver of the potential for bicycle activity.



Bike Route Sign
Photograph: h-town-visually.blogspot.com

Signed Bike Routes are streets identified as appropriate for bicycle use because of their low traffic volume. These are typically calm residential streets, and serve as alternatives to high trafficked roadways. Signage may indicate that they are bike routes to alert bicyclists and drivers, and may also provide the distance and direction to area destinations to assist bicyclists with navigating away from the typical street network.



Signed Shared Roadway (Sharrow)
Photograph: nrvbike.com

Signed Shared Roadways (Sharrows) are a bicycle route within an automobile traffic lane that should be wider than a typical lane, 14 to 16 feet wide. The arrow of the sharrow symbol identifies the safe line of motion for a bicyclist, toward the left side of the lane, away from the doors of parked vehicles.

Proper traffic and engineering studies will be required before implementing the bikeways concept.

Placing a heightened priority on upgrades to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and facilities near schools is an effective and efficient way of supporting neighborhood connectivity and mobility, as well as safety and healthy lifestyles for children. The availability and quality of bike and pedestrian infrastructure is often a prerequisite for children and families to be able to walk to and from school, including those with disabilities. Safe routes can be accomplished through a layered approach of proper outreach, policy, and infrastructure improvements.

3. **Initiate a District-wide “Safe Routes to Schools” program to support schools that are interested in participating.**

Five Corners may consider being a partner or leader for developing district-wide Safe Routes to Schools. Resources available through the National Center for Safe Routes for Schools include training programs, educational resources, as well as private, federal, and state funding opportunities. The following is an overview of some methods that can be used to achieve safe routes and encourage students to walk or bike to school.

PROGRAMMING

Encouragement and education are important programming elements of Safe Routes to Schools, which addresses behavioral changes based on people’s choices, and addresses possible concerns. The following may be implemented to help encourage neighborhood kids to walk or bike to school, which may address parents’ potential concerns about safety, and create an exciting event around traveling to school:

- Implementation of a monthly “walk” or “roll to school” days
- Organization of a “Walking School Bus” with neighborhood captains that require groups of students to walk together can be motivating and provide solidarity for children.
- Creation of a bicycle safety training program
- Installation of directional signage to guide students and parents

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

By addressing street design through infrastructure improvements, routes to school may become safer to travel by slowing down automobile traffic, and ensuring that students have proper sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure to travel on. Below is a list of potential improvements:

- “Safe Routes to School Route Map” that identifies the safest routes for walking and biking through neighborhoods surrounding schools
- Paved sidewalks with a minimum width of 5’ and wheelchair ramps at all intersections and crossing
- Street trees that provide shade along identified safe routes

- High-intensity activated crosswalk signals
- Speed sensitive signals
- Bicycle infrastructure through neighborhoods surrounding and leading to schools
- Bicycle racks and lockable shelters with racks at schools

POLICY CHANGES

By creating and enforcing 15 mile per hour speed limits in school zones around schools, automobile traffic will be forced to slow down, creating a safer environment for children to walk and bike. Doubled fines for speeders may be given in these marked zones.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

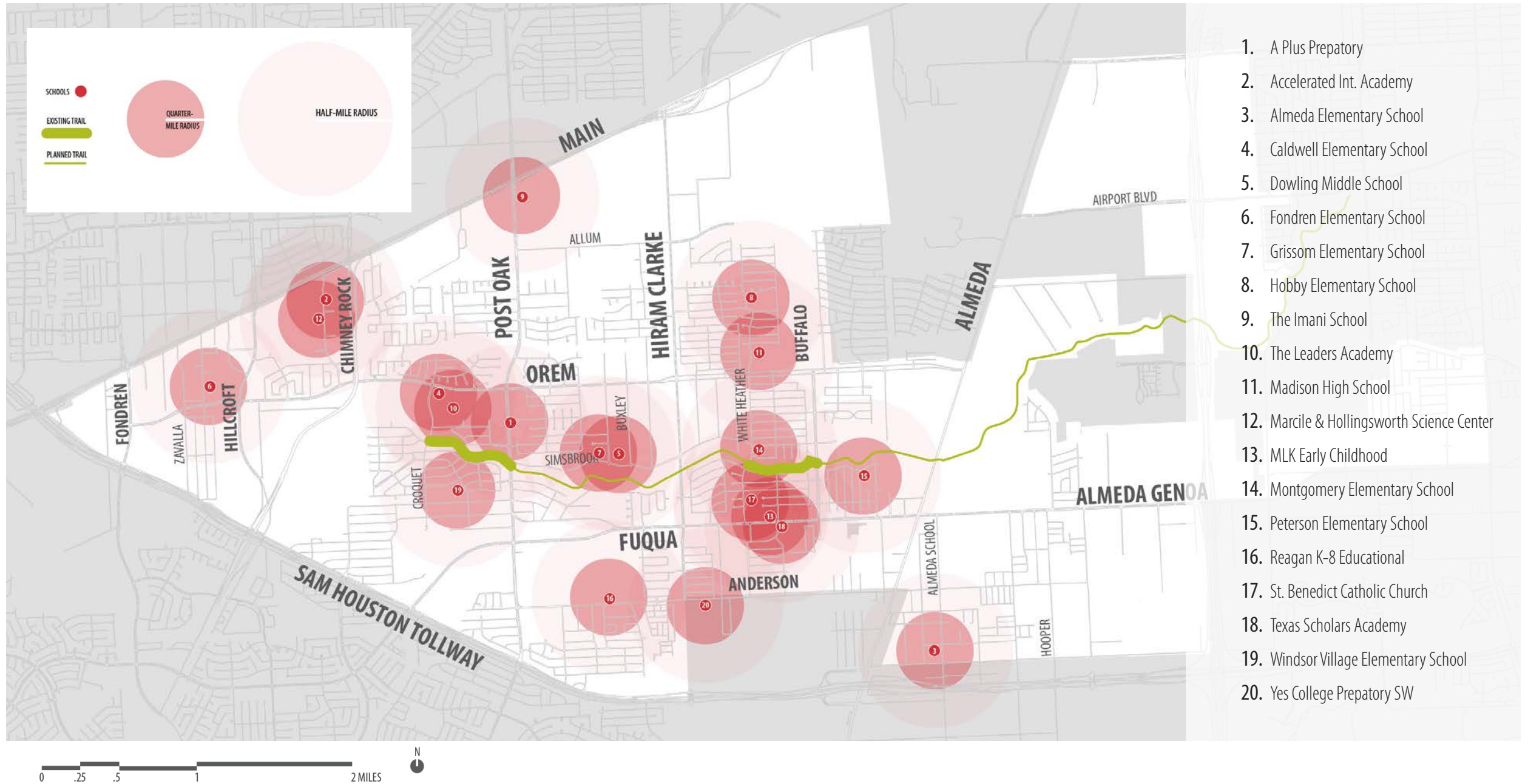
Funding opportunities for various programs and improvements are available through the following entities:

- Transportation Enhancements Program (administered by the State Department of Transportation)
- National Safe Routes to School Mini-Grants
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (administered by the Houston-Galveston Area Council and City of Houston Public Works Department)
- Recreational Trails Program
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Grants (Nutrition and Physical Activity Program)
- Environmental Protection Agency Grants Program (administered by the Environmental Education Division, Office of Children’s Health Protection and Environmental Education)



“Walking School Bus” organized in a neighborhood (left), programming effort to encourage bicycling to school (right).

QUARTER & HALF-MILE RADIUSES FROM AREA SCHOOLS



PARKS AND OPEN SPACE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Enhance existing parks to include adequate signage, lighting, and park amenities. Enhancements should be based on “Types of Parks and Open Spaces,” and “Classifications and Design Guidelines for Parks and Open Space.”
- 2 Ensure that land along Sims Bayou is secured for parks and open space with future development opportunities, and actively enhance the access points to showcase the bayou as an asset within the District.
- 3 Commission the design of new parks, in particular, a linear park for Buffalo Speedway in partnership with CenterPoint, and SPARK Parks in partnership with local schools.

WHY DO WE NEED PARKS AND OPEN SPACES?

Parks and open spaces serve a number of functions, which impact physical, social, and economic conditions by providing areas for recreations uses, food production, and helping facilitate mobility, alleviate health problems and aid in stormwater management. The Five Corners District already has a number of parks, however, the quality of open spaces and access to them is as important as providing them. Well-designed parks and open spaces have been found to increase neighboring property values and contribute to the overall economic revenue of an area. The functions of the parks can depend on a number of factors, such as size and proximity to supporting land uses (residential, public/civic, commercial). When designing park space, it is important to consider the potential uses. See Table 1: Types of Parks and Open Spaces for a description of various types, where they are best implemented, the types of uses they may allow, as well as potential sites in Five Corners. These parks and open space types include the following: district parks that attract a larger population; neighborhood parks that serve the surrounding community; linear parks that can facilitate both recreation and mobility through the site; SPARK Parks that utilize school parks for general use after school hours; Sims Bayou Trail which will connect the District to the greater Houston region; and Equestrian Parks, which are currently all operated my private entities.

PROPOSED OPEN SPACE PROJECTS

The following are proposed open space projects within Five Corners, in which the mangament district can play an integral role in their development.

- ① Sims Bayou Hike & Bike Trail and Access Points
- ② Harris County Dentention Basin Conversion into District Park
- ③ Linear Park along the Buffalo Speedway esplanade (West Orem Road to West Fuqua Street)
- ④ Linear Park along the West Orem Road esplanade (Hiram Clarke Road to Buffalo Speedway)
- ⑤ Linear Park along the West Orem Road esplanade (Buffalo Speedway to Almeda Road)
- ⑥ Linear Park along Centerpoint Easement adjacent to (east of) Hiram Clarke Rd. (Allum Road to Sims Bayou)

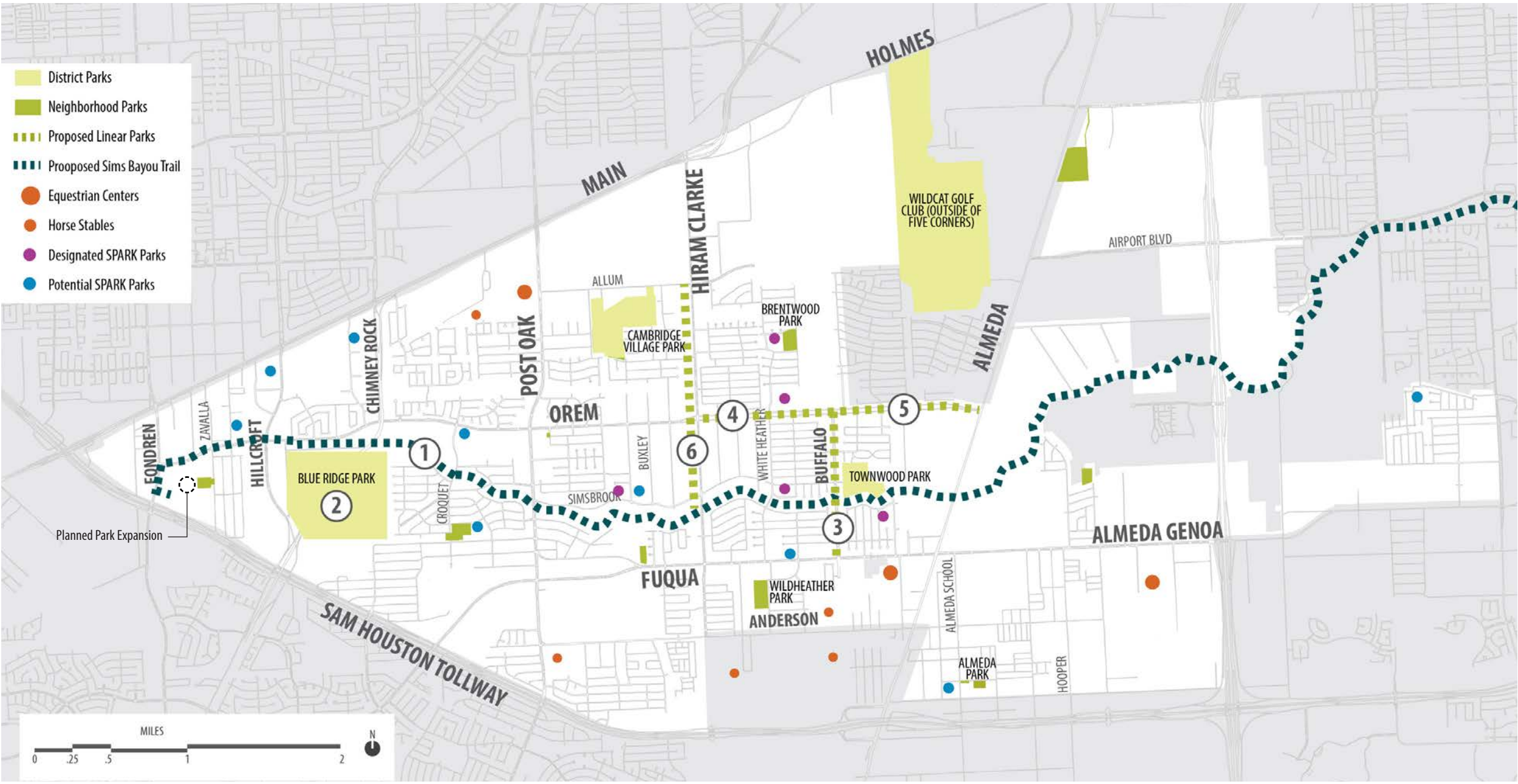








Table 1: TYPES OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

	SIZE	GENERAL LOCATION	TYPES OF USES	POTENTIAL SITES IN FIVE CORNERS
DISTRICT PARK A District Park is bigger in size and serves a larger population. For an area such as Five Corners, District Parks will more adequately serve the needs of the community, especially those that are not within close proximity to neighborhood parks and will provide opportunities for land preservation. District Parks also tend to attract visitors to the area.	Typically 30+ ACRES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Within walking distance of residential or commercial areas• Commercial activities should complement park functions such as food establishments.• District parks located within strictly residential uses should situate high activity areas further from residential areas to avoid noise and other disturbances.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Townwood Park• Proposed Blue Ridge Park.
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK Neighborhood parks are the most basic of park systems and should be within walking distance of neighborhood homes and assets. Many neighborhood parks already exist within Five Corners, however, there exist opportunities for enhancing them for greater usage that is safe.	Typically <30 ACRES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Within walking distance of residential areas and institutions such as schools, places of worship, and when applicable, local businesses.• Location of a neighborhood park should be catered to residents living within District, and is not intended to attract visitors from outside the District.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wildheather Park• Brentwood Park• Alameda Park
LINEAR PARK Linear parks are enhanced open spaces that stretch along a major corridor and have enhanced amenities such as walking and biking trails, seating, and more elaborate landscaping.	VARIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Esplanades• Utility easements		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Along Orem Drive between Hiram Clarke and Alameda.• Centerpoint easements along the west side of Hiram Clarke• Buffalo Speedway Esplanade
SPARK PARK The SPARK School Park Program was developed in 1983 as a way to increase park space in Houston, Texas. Public school grounds are developed into neighborhood parks, creating spaces that can be used by a wider group of people, with use extending beyond the duration of school hours. Schools can apply to the city to become a SPARK site, but the surrounding neighborhood must help plan and fund the SPARK Park.	VARIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School grounds		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designated Spark Parks: Madison High School, Hobby Elementary, Montgomery Elementary, Grissom Elementary, and Peterson Elementary.• Under Development: Alameda Elementary
SIMS BAYOU TRAIL Sims Bayou is undergoing a transformation as part of the Bayou Greenways Initiative. Upon completion there will be parkland along the Bayou that will contribute to stormwater management and provide recreational amenities such as bike and hike trails. These improvements will not only create a strong aesthetic asset, but will also contribute to mobility in the Five Corners District.	VARIES (see Bike + Hike Master Plan for Sections)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Along Sims Bayou		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sims Bayou Trail
EQUESTRIAN PARK The strong equine culture adds to the character of the District and provides an opportunity for the District to distinguish itself from other areas. Equestrian Parks generally provide access to horses, classes, instructors, and riding grounds to practice in. These areas are different than horse stable grounds, which are just holding grounds for horses.	VARIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Private development		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sam Houston Equestrian Center• Clear Round Show Jumpers• Debbie S Stables



1 Gene Green Beltway 8 Regional Park, Harris County



3 Paul Carr Jogging Trail, Heights



4 Spring Woods Middle School SPARK Park, Houston



1 Gene Green Beltway 8 Regional Park, Harris County



2 Patricia's Green Neighborhood Park, San Francisco



2 Washington Square, Philadelphia



3 Median Park



2 Patricia's Green Neighborhood Park, San Francisco



1 Discovery Green Park, Houston



3 Linear Park, Slovakia

1 **Enhance existing parks to include adequate signage, lighting, and park amenities. Enhancements should be based on “Types of Parks and Open Spaces,” and “Design Guidelines for Parks and Open Spaces.”**

Well-designed parks and open spaces have been found to increase neighboring property values and contribute to the overall economic revenue of an area. Parks and open spaces provide opportunities for recreational uses, food production, can facilitate mobility, alleviate health problems, and contribute to stormwater management. In addition, incorporating the 5 Corners logo in park design and infrastructure can help to increase the visibility of the management district

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

ACCESS & VISIBILITY:

- When possible, parks should be located within a ½ mile radius of a high concentration of residents and activities.
- Connect parks to neighboring areas through adequate walking/biking paths, and when possible, transit, to facilitate easier access.
- Signage should be placed at the periphery and at major points within the park to orient users and to provide information on park and equipment usage. The branding and graphic identity of the Park should be consistent with the graphic identity of the greater District.
- Proper lighting should be provided to guide those in the park, as well as around the park. The lighting should fit the use of the park to ensure higher usage and safety.

DESIGN FOR ACTIVE RECREATION

- Design of parks should facilitate activities such as running, biking, and playing, while also providing respite areas with seating and water fountains.
- Providing opportunities for multiple activities can make open spaces enjoyable for a wide range of people.
- Consider using non-traditional park equipment in the design of the park. This allows all ages to get involved in play while also serving as an educational tool. Non-traditional furnishings can include adult fitness equipment , “loose parts”, and “nature play” components (see section on “Nature Play”).
- Play equipment should be designed to prevent injuries and should be placed in visible areas for safety and ease of access.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Parks and open spaces can also become areas for stormwater management. Consider the use of rain gardens, wetlands, and swales to manage stormwater and mitigate the need for large detention areas.

2. **Ensure that land along Sims Bayou is secured for parks and open space as future development occurs, and actively enhance the access points to showcase the bayou as an asset within the District.**

With Sims Bayou at the heart of the vision for the Environmental Design Master Plan, extensions and enhancements of Sims Bayou park land are critical to improving recreational assets and promoting economic development. Five Corners District can play an active role in ensuring the land along Sims Bayou is secured for parks and open space as future development occurs along Sims Bayou to create a recreational destination in the District with the potential to attract outside visitors. The Environmental and Urban Design Committee within Five Corners District can educate developers on the role of public spaces to create vibrant urban centers that may be enhanced with events programming, similar to Discovery Green in Downtown Houston, which features music events, exercise classes, and festivals. These types of events may be programming that the District organizes and sponsors, where schools and local organizations are potential collaborators for performances or outreach. The Commercial Development Recommendations may be referenced for more information on how development and public spaces may be considered in relation to Sims Bayou.

The bayou is also has the potential to enhance the overall mobility of residents to connect to transit, access schools, retail, and city-wide destinations. A connected trail system that links to primary and secondary roadways is essential to fostering a healthy, active community, while promoting equitable transportation options for residents, where people of all ages, income levels, and physical abilities become linked to a safe network of well-maintained pathways. Currently, an asphalt trail abuts Sims Bayou from South Post Oak to Croquet. A separate 2 mile segment of asphalt trail abuts the bayou east of SH-288. Already proposed and funded is a 10 foot wide concrete trail from I-45 to South Post Oak — a joint project with the US Army Corps of Engineers, the City of Houston, and the Houston Parks Board which will serve to connect the two existing segments of trails. One recommendation is to extend the bayou trail westward from Croquet to Hillcroft. An extension to Hillcroft would leverage the current investments being made to the trail system and allow the bayou to strategically interface with the activity generators located on Hillcroft, such as Home Depot and a number of churches.

Promoting Sims Bayou as a premier asset to the community for both recreation and transportation through Five Corners is key to the success of this recommendation. Trail entrances off of a major corridor invite the general public to enter the system. Neighborhood entrances may appeal to families, allowing children and teens to access the trails without having to walk or bike along high-traffic streets. Highlighting METRO transit routes and facilities in relation to the Sim Bayou trails will also expand residents' transportation reach in the region.

TRAIL ACCESS POINT ENHANCEMENTS:

Trail access point enhancements will increase perceptions of the trail system as an amenity within Five Corners District, and improve users' ability to navigate through the District from the bayou. The following points where Sims Bayou intersects with roadways offer opportunities to connect residents to the trail system, draw users from the trails to area destinations, and make useful connections:

Hilcroft Street	South Post Oak Road	White Heather Drive
Chimney Rock	Standliff Street	Buffalo Speedway
Croquet Street	Hiram Clarke Road	Alameda Road



- Sims Bayou Routes Trail
Planned, Proposed, or Funded
- Sims Bayou Trail Access Points
Proposed

Most people are accustomed to navigating around Five Corners District, and the Houston region, through the roadway system. As the trails become widely used for purposeful trips rather than simply recreational use, street signs and wayfinding will be essential to helping people connect to destination, as they will not have the same landmarks and context clues on the bayou as they do on the street grid.

Similar to street signs, destination wayfinding with direction and distance is recommended at the following intersections with Sims Bayou. Other destinations may be incorporated, including future developments, such as the proposed Town Center.

1. Fondren Road — Missouri City Park & Ride
2. Croquet Street — YMCA, Jean Hines Caldwell Elementary, Windsor Village (Park, Community Center Park, Elementary School)
3. South Post Oak Road — METRO Route 33, Dowling Middle School, Town Center (Proposed location at South Post Oak and West Orem)
4. White Heather — METRO Route 14, Montgomery Elementary, Brentwood Park, Madison High School, Whiteheather Park, YES Prep
5. Buffalo Speedway — Townwood Community Center & Park, METRO Hiram Clarke Transit Center, Multi-Service Center

An example of how these access points to Sims Bayou might be designed, along with a kit of parts, is presented on pages 62 and 63.

3. Commission the design of new parks, in particular, linear parks for Buffalo Speedway, Hiram Clarke Road, and West Orem Drive in partnership with Centerpoint

While Sims Bayou provides connectivity and open space from east to west, creating linear parks in the wide, straight corridors beneath the power lines along West Orem Drive and Hiram Clarke Road would expand connectivity to Sims Bayou and create a network of trails accessible by many other parts of the district. A new state regulation reducing the liability of Centerpoint, the company that owns the land under power lines, means that the creation of these parks is now a feasible option.

An example of how these linear parks might be designed, along with a kit of parts, is presented on pages 64 and 65.



SIMS BAYOU TRAIL ACCESS

KIT OF PARTS: SIMS BAYOU TRAIL ACCESS

Directional Signage that indicates direction and distance to nearby destinations, such as parks, schools, transit and activity centers



\$25,000 - \$50,000

Street signs at roadway intersections, including bayou trail intersections to ease navigation from the trail onto the street system



Pavement Markers set into sidewalk

\$120,000 - \$180,000

Street Trees and Landscaping along sidewalks and trails to create a comfortable walking experience with protective shade covering



Pedestrian Lighting that improves safety at night, and creates a welcoming environment for evening activity

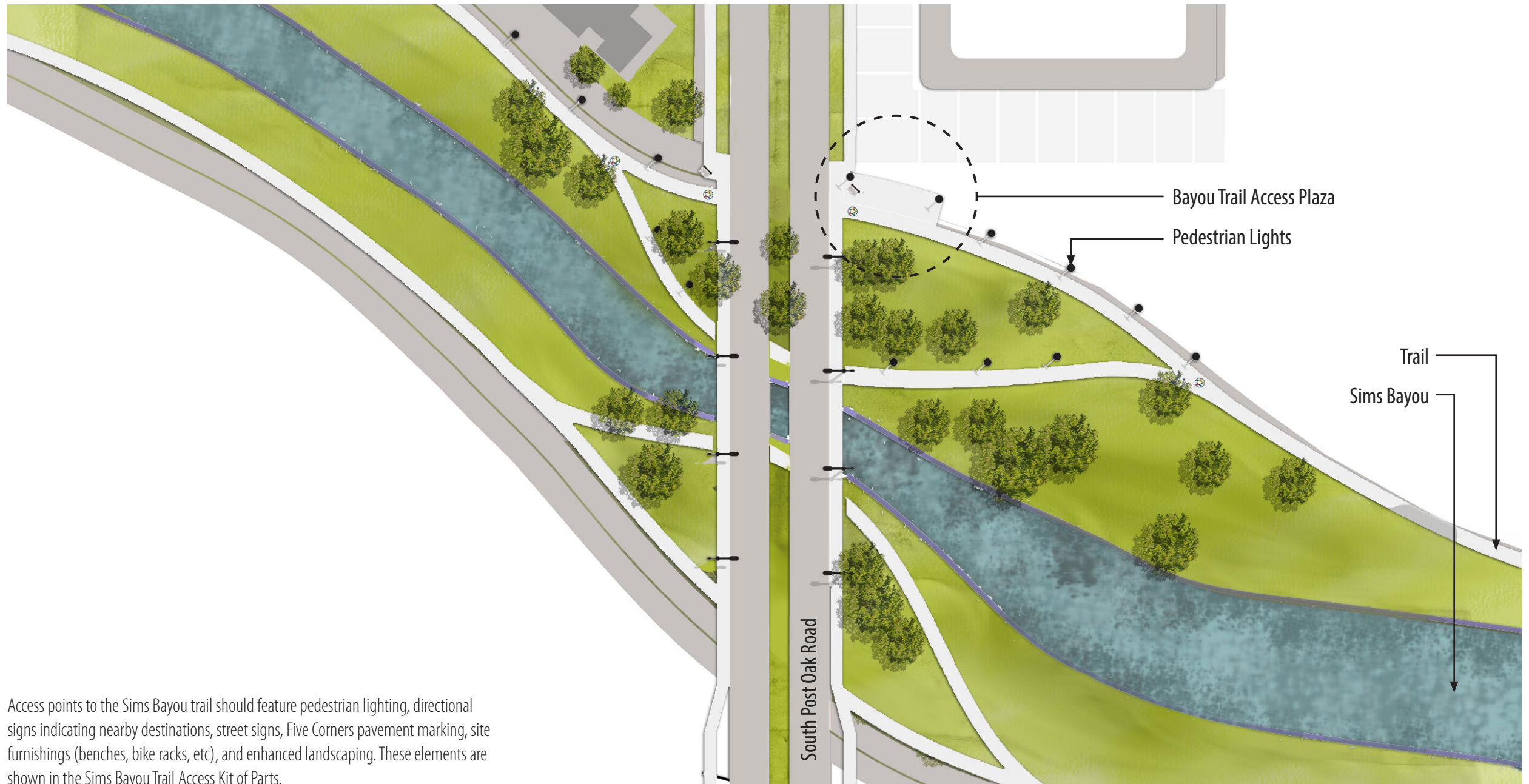


\$50,000 - \$100,000

Site furnishings may include trash receptacles, bike racks and benches for public use



\$20,000 - \$40,000

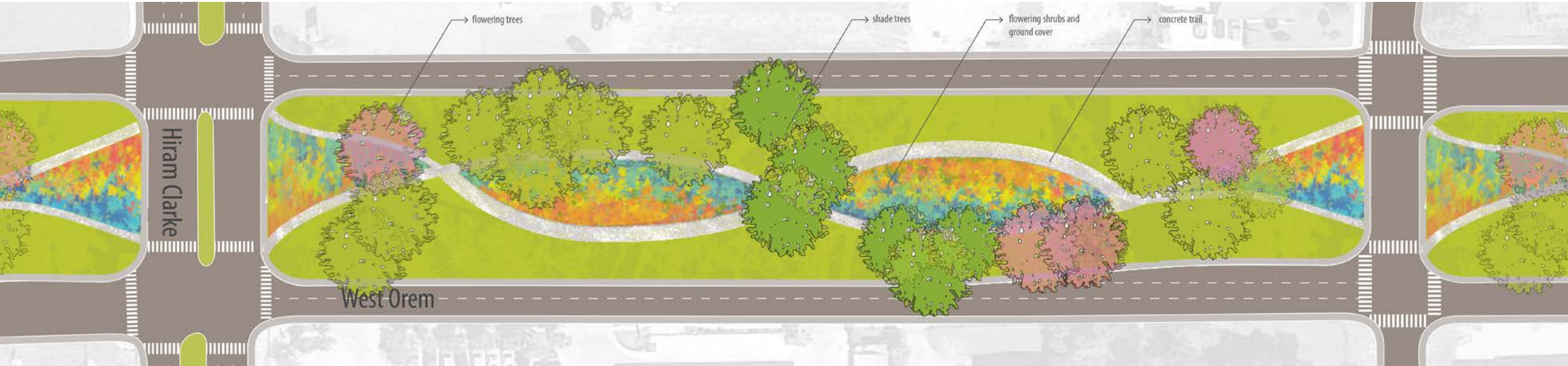


Access points to the Sims Bayou trail should feature pedestrian lighting, directional signs indicating nearby destinations, street signs, Five Corners pavement marking, site furnishings (benches, bike racks, etc), and enhanced landscaping. These elements are shown in the Sims Bayou Trail Access Kit of Parts.

Plan View of Sims Bayou and roadway intersection as it may be implemented at South Post Oak Road



LINEAR PARK



Kit of Parts: Linear Parks

While certain features of linear parks may vary based on their length and width, consistent branding, landscaping and design will create a the feeling of a cohesive network.

Median Landscaping

in the first two esplanades of key intersections in each direction with street trees shrubs, and colorful ground cover

Street Trees in the pedestrian realm provide shade



Pedestrian Lighting

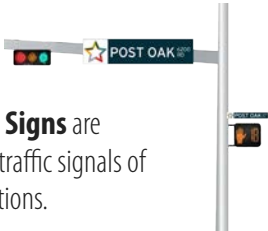
that improves safety at night, and creates a welcoming environment for evening activity



Illuminated Bollards can be installed at pedestrian safety zones, adjacent to the crossing



Larger **Street Signs** are posted on the traffic signals of major intersections.



Smaller street signs are posted above stop signs, or above pedestrian crossing signals.



Crosswalks

with continental striping across major intersections



Pedestrian Signalized Crossings may be installed at either end of the crosswalk, and in the median at the pedestrian refuge



Pavers built into sidewalk infrastructure at plazas or pedestrian crossings



Site furnishings may include trash receptacles, bike racks and benches for public use

STREET CONNECTIVITY RECOMMENDATION

1 Ensure that all street extensions accommodate not only automobile activity, but pedestrians and bicyclists too.

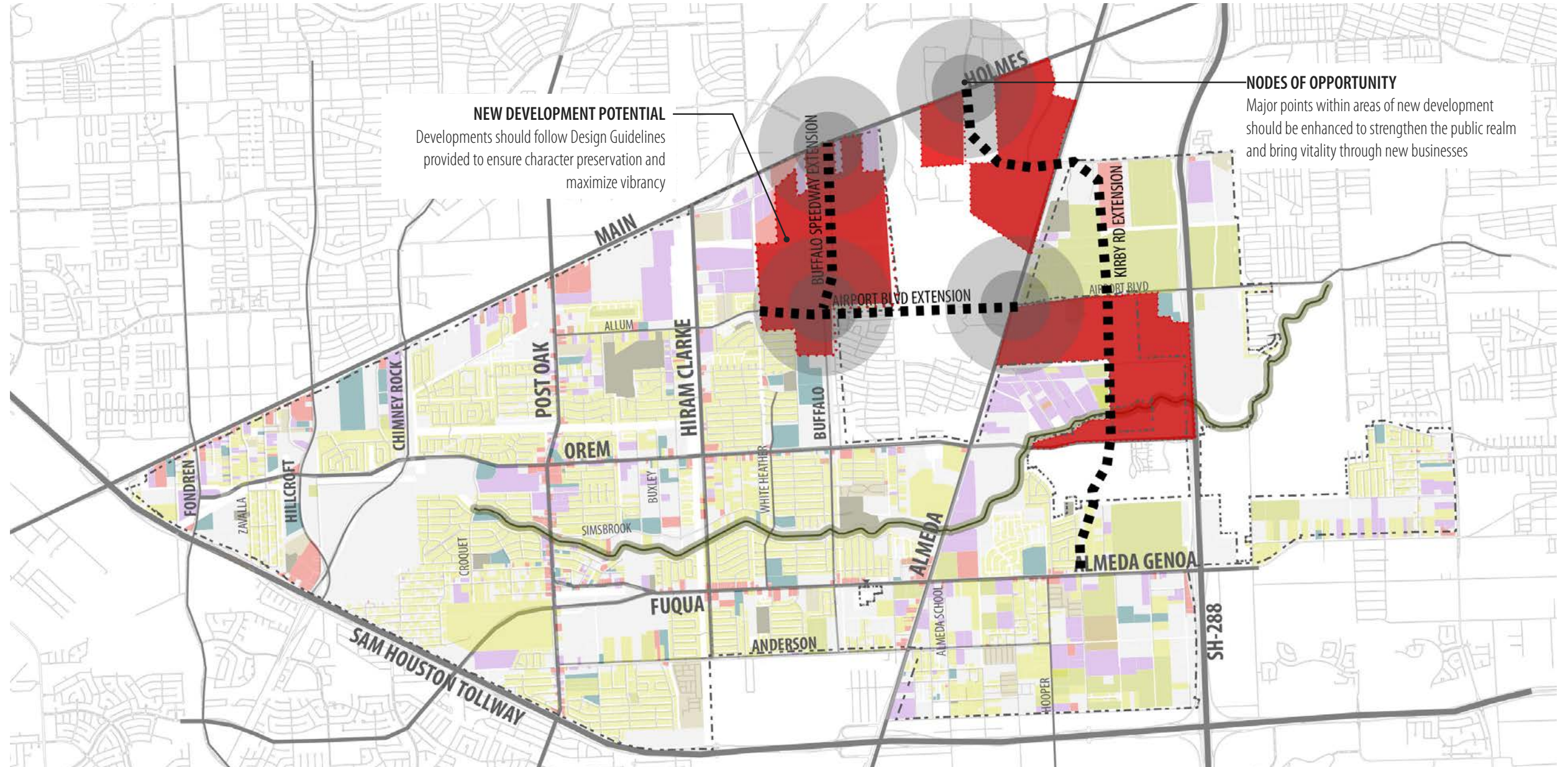
Street connectivity ensures a well connected network by which residents and visitors can easily and efficiently get around the District, as well as outside the District. A well-connected network is an important base for creating a cohesive system that allows for uninterrupted access and greater opportunities for multi-modal transportation. Well-designed physical linkages can also enhance the sense of community amongst people and provide opportunities for social interaction.



1. **Ensure that all street extensions accommodate not only automobile activity, but pedestrians and bicyclists too.**

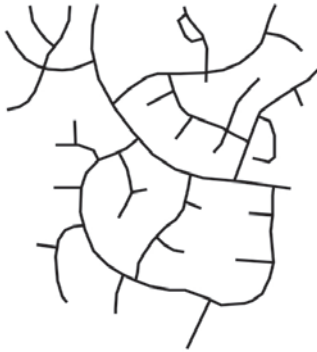
A number of major street extensions are planned within the Five Corners District boundaries: Kirby from its current extent to Reed Road south to Alameda Genoa, West Airport Boulevard from Alameda to Hiram Clarke, and Buffalo Speedway from the Airport Boulevard extension north to Holmes Road. The management should coordinate with the Public Works Department to ensure that these streets are designed for pedestrians as well as cars, and suggest that the projects be used as a pilot for Houston's new Complete Streets policy. Sidewalks with a minimum width of 5 feet should be provided along all streets and on-street bicycle facilities should be provided as appropriate. Additional connections of bicycle trails and routes should be made as shown in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Access Recommendations.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

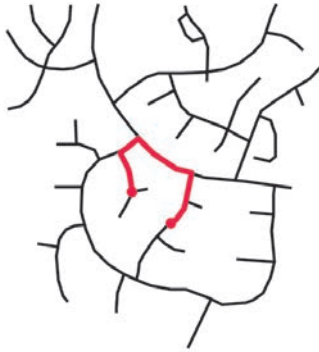


As streets are extended, new developments will inevitably follow in the northwest corner of the District. New activity along these corridors can prove to be highly beneficial for the community if planned properly. New developments should reflect the existing character within the Five Corners District, while also pushing for more innovative development that brings fresh ideas and economic opportunities into the neighborhood. The following are roadway design guidelines to encourage in future developments in the District:

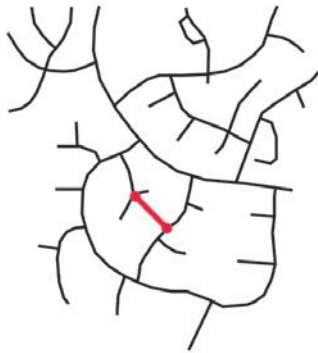
1. Streets within new developments should follow a grid pattern, rather than traditional subdivision cul-de-sac patterns. Grid patterns provide greater linkages between public and private domains, and ensure multi-modal access. They can also enhance the social character of a place.
2. Developments should incorporate a mix of uses to ensure comprehensive development.
3. Large-scale retail should be situated on the periphery of the District, such as along the US 90A Corridor, whereas residential and small-scale retail should be provided along the Kirby and Buffalo Speedway extensions, and within walking distance of key intersections.
4. All new development should provide for pedestrian and bicycle access with sidewalks and bicycle facilities such as dedicated lanes and bike racks.
5. Parking should be situated at the back of developments with an enhanced public realm in the front (street trees, sidewalks, and street furniture).



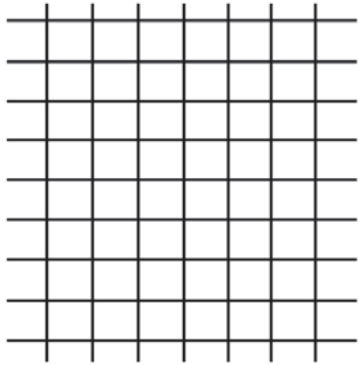
Typical subdivision developments with dead end cul-de-sacs increase the need for driving.



Destinations may close to one another, but without the proper street connectivity, the trip distance is increased beyond walkable or bikeable distances.



Street connections can reduce travel distance, and promote walking and bicycling.



A street grid should be established for future developments to reduce trip distances, traffic congestion, and improve transit and service efficiency.



Market Street, The Woodlands, TX Photograph: www.marketstreet-thewoodlands.com



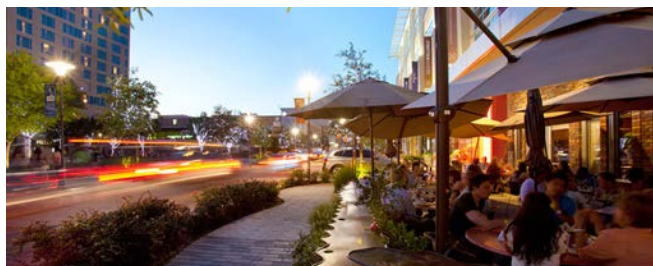
The Domain, Austin, TX, Photograph: Simon Malls



Mueller Development, Austin, TX, Photographs: austintx.gov, rviplanning.com



The Woodlands Mall, The Woodlands, TX



CityCentre, Houston, TX, Photograph: citycentrehouston.com



Sugar Land Town Square, Sugar Land, TX, Photographs: sugarlandtownsquare.com



COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Encourage clusters of local retail at key intersections and promote “design principles for community retail”
- 2 Encourage the consolidation of parking and promote parking design guidelines to create a comfortable walking environment.
- 3 Continue the development of large scale commercial business along Beltway 8, SH-288 and South Main Street/US-90 A.
- 4 Seek a developer and land assemblage for a “town center” located at a key intersection near Sims Bayou, for example at South Post Oak between West Orem and West Fuqua.

Economic Development and Urban Design are intrinsically linked in today’s world: good urban design is capable of envisioning a vibrant, beautiful place that will attract investment and enhance the quality of life, and a capable economic development professional can provide an analysis of how much and what type of development can be realistically expected, and devise a strategy to attract the type of investment needed to fulfill that vision. This section provides a brief outline and recommendations for some economic development strategies that support the urban design and public realm projects presented in the previous sections. However, it is recommended that the district engage an experienced economic development consultant in order to develop a more detailed strategy to implement and support the vision outlined in this report.

Commercial & Retail Development

Commercial retail development within the Five Corners District can be divided into three broad types, each with their own characteristics, development types and guidelines: Large scale, local retail, and town center. These three types of businesses work together to create a diverse commercial environment, which encourages increased tax revenue, improves the aesthetic of the community, improves quality of life, and draws visitors to the District.

1. Encourage clusters of local retail at key intersection and promote “design principles for community retail”.

Community Retailers are the smaller shops and businesses that line our major roadways. They may be small grocery stores, convenience stores, restaurants or other shops that serve mostly people within the neighborhood. In many cases, they may be in the form of strip malls or smaller stand alone shops. A walkable, more urban type of retail development might involve clusters of stores at major intersections. The public realm enhancements at Key Intersections suggested earlier in this report will both attract and complement local retail that chooses to follow principles that help create an interesting and vibrant sidewalk experience:

- At least 70% of the street frontage should be transparent, either as windows or display space
- Buildings should not be set back farther than 10 feet from the sidewalk. Landscaping or outdoor seating (for restaurants and cafes) should occupy the space between the sidewalk and the building front.
- Customer entrances are required along all exterior walls facing a public street. Additional entrances may be provided adjacent to parking.
- Parking should be located behind stores rather than in front of them.

While the management district may have limited power to require these features, there are several ways that new and existing businesses can be encouraged to follow these design guidelines, for example:

- Designate an architecture or construction professional on the urban design committee to provide assistance to prospective new businesses as needed.
- Offer tax exemptions or reductions for developers that comply with these guidelines
- Explore opportunities to use funds from the TIRZ district to create an incentive program

2. **Encourage the consolidation of parking and promote parking design guidelines to create a comfortable walking environment.**

In a suburban location like Five Corners, parking space is one of the most critical aspects of commercial retail. While necessary for a location where most people travel by car, huge parking lots discourage people from walking and are detrimental to the environment. Consolidating parking and encouraging visitors to park once and then walk to nearby destinations is one strategy that can enhance the effect of investments in the public realm. TIRZ funds can be used to build central public parking, and parking lot design can be oriented towards the pedestrian experience and enhance the public realm by including plazas, shade trees and following certain design principles:

- Large parking lots should be positioned behind buildings, rather than in front of them.
- Pedestrian walkways should be designed to be visually attractive near entrances, and should be distinguished from driving surfaces by either brick, special pavers, concrete
- Design parking areas so that pedestrians walk parallel to moving cars, and minimize the need for pedestrians to cross parking aisles and landscape areas. Parking areas should be designed in a manner which links the structures to the street sidewalks and pedestrian walkways should be provided through parking lots.
- Assure that walkways and sidewalks must be covered with awnings, shade from landscape or other weather protection at all customer entrances and along pedestrian walkways.
- Plazas and other types of open space can be incorporated, creating a public space for farmers markets and other events

These principles are applicable to parking lots for all uses: small and large businesses, multi-family housing, schools and other civic buildings, and public parking lots.

3. **Continue the development of large scale commercial business along Beltway 8, SH-288 and South Main Street/US-90 A.**

“Big Box” retailers are large, typically regional or national chain stores that are located along busy highways and frontage roads. They are distinguished by their large size, usually over 50,000 square feet, relatively undistinguished architecture, and are usually surrounded by large parking areas. In many ways, Big Box retail is the opposite of the type of development that drives walkable, vital communities, but does have advantages:

- The district is able to capture sales tax revenue from people who live outside the district
- The Big Box retailers provide a “buffer” between the highways and other, more community oriented, areas of the district.
- Big Box stores can serve as “anchors,” meaning that they draw visitors who may also frequent smaller stores nearby
- The convenience of being close to some types of big box retail, especially supermarkets, can attract residential development

For the most part, Big Box retail will continue and should be encouraged exclusively along the highways, as this is where they will be able to draw the most traffic. A high proportion of those traveling along the highways are from outside of the community and are commuting between their own home communities and job centers within the loop. Adjacent building plots to these highways are the proper area for future Big Box retailer development. While it may be difficult to enforce specific design guidelines, the following principles should be encouraged:

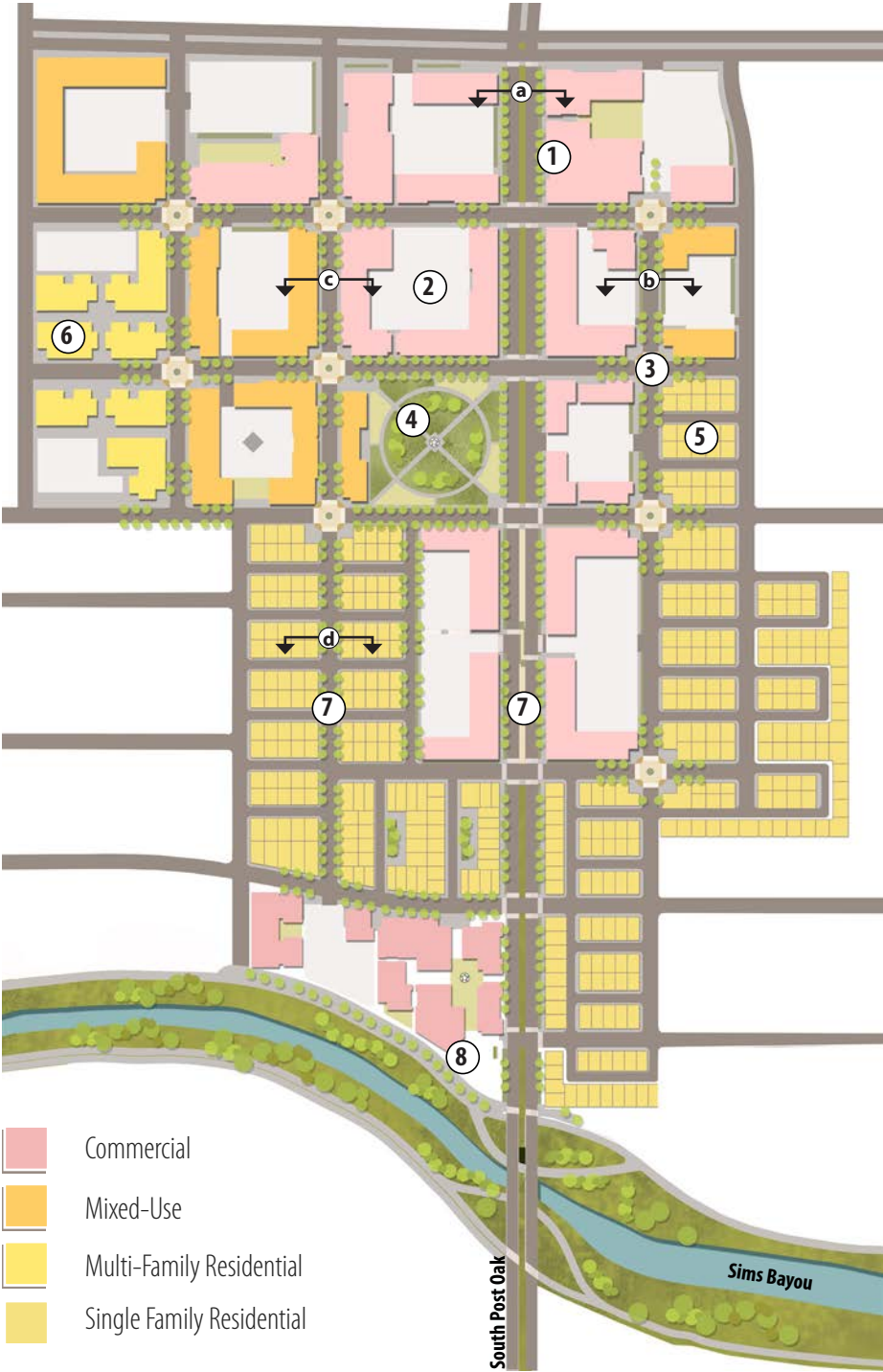
- Uninterrupted facades are strongly discouraged. For every 100’ of linear wall, there should be a corresponding inset, offset, projection of at least three feet.
- Building heights must be varied. Mansard roofs, gable roofs, hip roofs, dormers, or parapets must be utilized.
- Exterior display windows and separate outside entrances to break the mass of large, blank building walls.
- Customer entrances are required along all exterior walls facing a public street. Where a transit stop is present on a public street, an entrance must face the transit stop and a visually attractive walkway should be provided, and should be distinguished from driving surfaces by either brick, special pavers, concrete, or in rare cases painted asphalt paved areas, which are designed to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort.

4. Town Center Vision and Design Principles

One potential strategy to realize the District’s vision of integrating urban and metropolitan commercial development while promoting a sense of place would be the creation of a town center at one of the major intersections within Five Corners. A town center is a vibrant, compact multi-use development centered around a distinct open space that can strengthen community bonds and provide a destination for visitors. The creation of a vibrant and walkable mixed use town centers has been an increasingly popular response to changing attitudes and demographics: a more diverse mix of families, a demand for the cosmopolitan vibrancy and convenience of living in a compact walkable area, and the desire to recover a sense of community that has been lost recent years as cities and suburbs have grown so quickly.

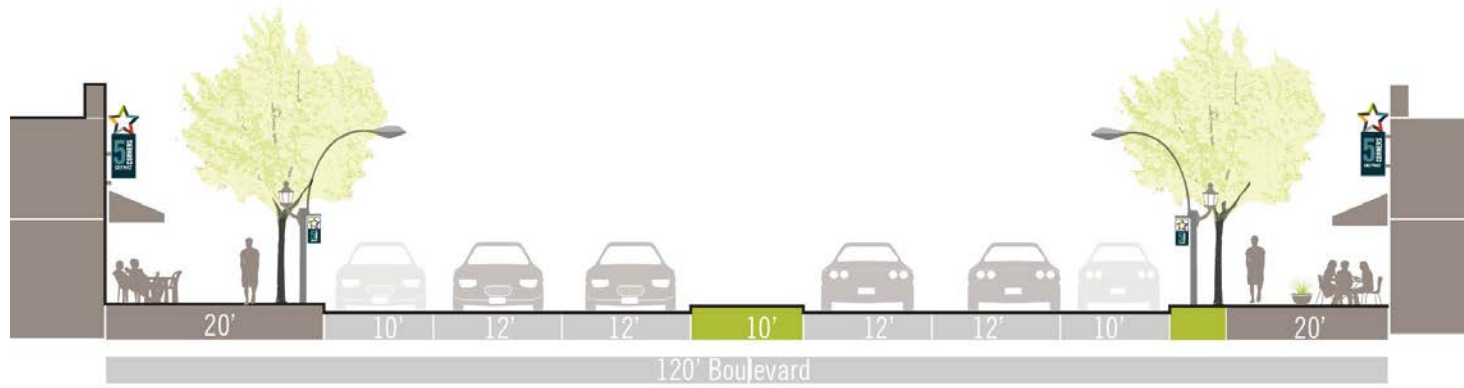
There are several successful town centers in Houston and Fort Bend County, like Sugar Land Town Square, CityCentre, and Market Street in The Woodlands, and could be equally successful in the Five Corners District. Developing a town center has the potential to increase property values, allow residential development without sacrificing valuable open space, attract businesses and shoppers from all over Houston and strengthen the District’s identity by creating a new metropolitan destination. Implementation would involve a public private partnership, with the Management District and one or more private developers contributing resources and expertise towards a shared vision, perhaps inspired by the guidelines and concepts presented here.

The best site for a town center would offer both a unique setting and good connections to major streets and highways – a condition satisfied by several intersections along West Orem Drive and West Fuqua Road that are within a 15 minute walk of Sims Bayou. This vision uses South Post Oak Road and West Orem Drive as a site due to the potential to convert existing industrial property, but the concepts and recommendations could be applied elsewhere.

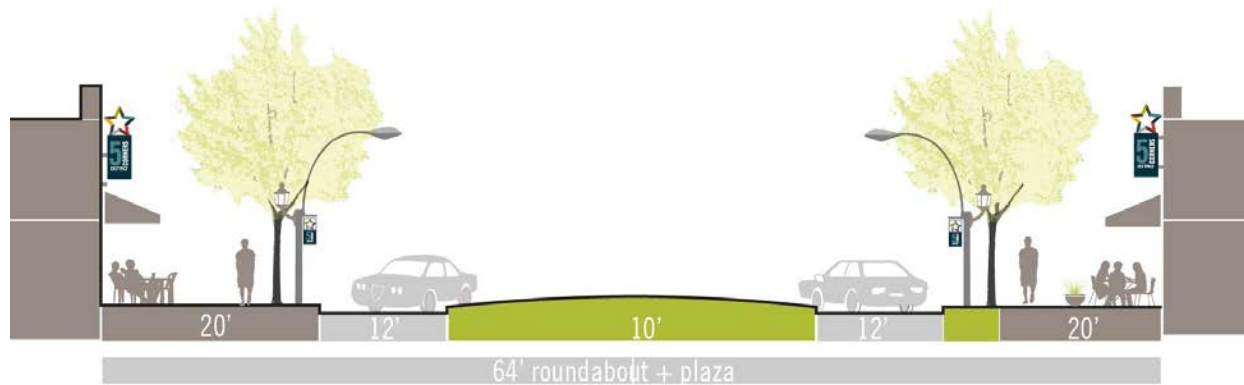


- ① Minimal setbacks along retail streets
- ② Parking is consolidated at the center of blocks behind buildings
- ③ Small roundabouts and plazas at main intersections
- ④ Central plaza for gatherings and civic events
- ⑤ Opportunities for single family homes
- ⑥ Opportunities for multi family residential buildings
- ⑦ Tree-lined streets with wide sidewalks connect the Bayou with the Central Plaza
- ⑧ Restaurant park to create a unique destination along Sims Bayou

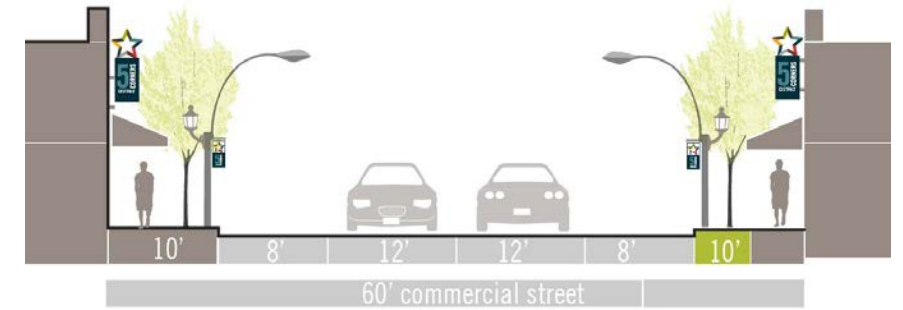
COMPLETE STREETS FOR PEDESTRIAN ACITIVTY



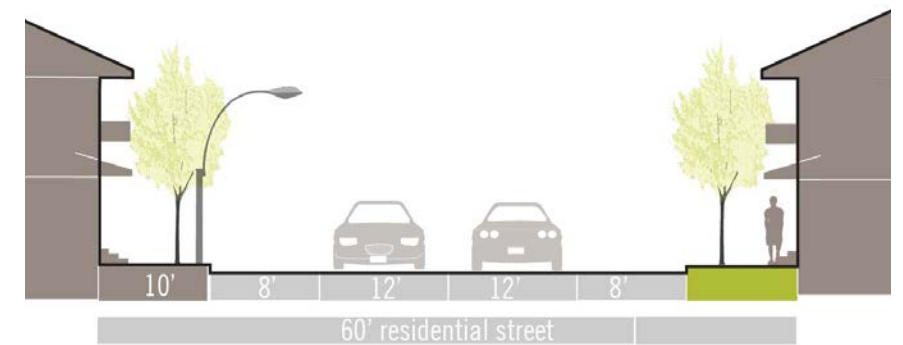
- (a)** A major boulevard accommodates two lanes of traffic as well as providing spacious sidewalks



- (b)** Small roundabouts at intersections create plaza space and provide a safe place to cross



- (c)** Smaller commercial streets still have a continuous setback and street trees for shade



- (d)** Residential streets are well lit and have houses on compact lots with some setback

Street sections a-d correspond to Town Center plan on page 72.

Key Concepts:

The fundamental principles behind a successful town center project are a vibrant walkable public realm, a mix of uses that allow for activity through the day and into the evenings, and a unique aspect that makes it a destination and the focal point of the district. In order to achieve this the development should be laid out in a compact, walkable grid, as shown in the plan to the right. Different types of commercial and mixed use buildings are focused around a central plaza, and two tree-lined streets with wide sidewalks lead to a scenic plaza at the edge of the Bayou. Together, these centers of activity can provide the unique destination that attracts residents, businesses and visitors. The development should also feature a mix of housing types, from single family houses on compact lots to small apartment buildings, in order to accommodate a diverse range of families and individuals.

Well-lit streets with wide shady sidewalks are vital in order to create a vibrant public realm and encourage visitors and residents to walk throughout the town center. The sections to the left illustrate how the principles of complete streets – the practice of designing streets with equal attention to pedestrians, cars and bicyclists, could be applied in 5 Corners. On a major boulevard like South Post Oak, shrinking the median allows for wider sidewalks that can accommodate benches, trees, sidewalk cafes and provide room for a group of three or four people to walk side-by-side. At the intersections of commercial streets, roundabouts create small public spaces, and keep traffic at speeds safe for pedestrians to cross. Rather than placing parking lots in front of buildings, they can be consolidated behind buildings on the inside of blocks, encouraging visitors to park once and walk. This also allows for a continuous building facade and minimal setbacks so that entrances and windows of shops, offices and other destinations can make the street interesting to walk down.



Restaurants and shops around a plaza at the edge of the Sims Bayou provides a unique destination and easy trail access.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

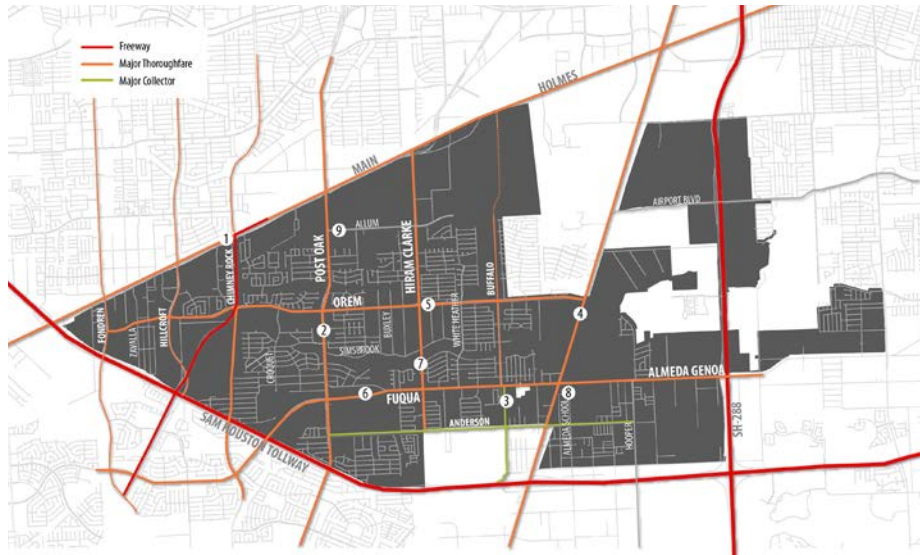
This Environmental Design Master Plan presents strategies and recommendations to help the Five Corners District strengthen its identity as a beautiful, safe and attractive place to live, shop, work and invest in. The table on pages 76-77 summarizes all recommendations.

Recommendation	Time Frame	Ease of Implementation	Partners and notes
Visibility and Branding			
Create and install Five Corners signature street signage at identified intersections of major corridors and neighborhood streets	Short	Easy	Public Works, Branding Consultant
Create and encourage subdivision developers to utilize signage templates and keep all signage cohesive with the overall branding of the District.	Medium	Medium	Private Developers, Branding Consultant
Create and install directional signs, identifier signs, gateway markers and pavement markers at key points identified on the Targeted Streetscape Improvements map.	Medium	Medium	Public Works, Branding Consultant. Potential opportunity to involve local artists and organizations for public artwork project.
Apply graphic standards to all print and web media produced by the District.	Short	Easy	
Targeted Streetscape Improvements			
Designate the points where major thoroughfares cross into Five Corners as “District Gateways.”	Short	Medium	Public Works, Branding Consultant
Highlight “Key Intersections” within the District and create a quality public realm for businesses and residents.	Medium	Medium	Public Works, Branding Consultant

Recommendation	TIME FRAME	EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION	PARTNERS AND NOTES
Pedestrian and Bicycle Access			
Reduce residents’ reliance on the automobile by connecting neighborhoods to work, school, transit, retail, community destinations and recreational amenities through a trail system.	Short	Medium	Public Works, Bayou Greenways, Parks Department
Develop safe and seamless connections between trails, sidewalks and bike routes for pedestrians and bicyclists to access destinations.	Short	Medium	Public Works, Parks Department
Initiate a District-wide “Safe Routes to Schools” program to support schools that are interested in participating	Short	Easy	School District, Parents, Police Department
Parks and Open Spaces			
Enhance existing parks to include adequate signage, lighting, and park amenities. Enhancements should be based on Park Classifications and Design Guidelines.	Short	Medium	Parks Department
Ensure that land along Sims Bayou is secured for parks and open space with future development opportunities, and actively enhance the access points to showcase the bayou as an asset within the district	Medium	Easy	Public Works, Parks Department, Branding Consultant
Commission the design of new parks, in particular, a Linear Parks in partnership with CenterPoint, and SPARK Parks in partnership with local schools.	Medium	Medium	Parks Department, Planning Department, CenterPoint

Recommendation	Time Frame	Ease of Implementation	Partners and notes
Street Connectivity			
Ensure that all street extensions accommodate not only automobile activity, but pedestrian and bicyclists too.	Medium	Easy	Public Works Department, Houston Coalition for Complete Streets
COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT			
Encourage clusters of local retail at key intersections and promote “design principles for community retail”	Medium	Easy	Business Owners, Planning Department
Encourage the consolidation of parking and promote design guidelines for pedestrian and parking amenities.	Medium	Medium	Commercial Developers, Planning Department, TIRZ 25, Public Works Department
Continue the development of large scale commercial business along Beltway 8, SH-288 and South Main Street/US-90A.	Long	Difficult	Private Developers
Seek a developer and land assemblage for a “town center” located at a key intersection near Sims Bayou, for example at South Post Oak between West Orem and West Fuqua.	Long	Medium	Private Developers, Property Owners, Planning Department

PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION



Visibility and Branding improvements should be prioritized along highways and major thoroughfares.



Traffic volumes are a major factor when prioritizing Key Intersection projects.

PROPOSED PROJECTS: PRIORITIES AND PHASING

1. Apply branding and visibility elements to all major thoroughfares.

1A. Apply large street signs to traffic lights at each intersection of major thoroughfares or highways.

Estimated Cost: \$65,000 – 75,000 total for 24 intersections

South Main Street/US-90A at:

Fondren
Hillcroft
Chimney Rock
South Post Oak
Hiram Clarke
Buffalo Speedway*

West Orem at:

Fondren
Hillcroft
Chimney Rock
South Post Oak
Hiram Clarke
Buffalo Speedway
Alameda

West Fuqua at:

South Post Oak
Hiram Clarke
Buffalo Speedway
Alameda
SH-288

Beltway 8 at:

South Main Street/US 90A
Fondren
Hillcroft
Chimney Rock
West Fuqua
South Post Oak

*denotes new streets or intersections recommended as part of the master plan

1B. Apply small street signs at all intersections along major thoroughfares:

Estimated Cost: \$150,000 – \$160,000 total for approximately 140 intersections

Major Thoroughfares of Five Corners District:

North / South Corridors:

Fondren Road
Hillcroft Street
Chimney Rock Road
South Post Oak Road
Hiram Clarke Road
Buffalo Speedway
Alameda Road
Kirby Drive

East / West Corridors:

Allum Road
West Airport Boulevard
West Orem Drive
West Fuqua Street
Alameda-Genoa Road

2. Implement district Gateway Projects, prioritized by volume of traffic and public transportation routes

Estimated Cost Range: \$350-500,000 per gateway

Priority 1: District Gateways at intersections with a high volume of traffic and major bus routes

- South Post Oak at South Main Street/US 90A
- Hiram Clark at South Main Street/US 90A
- Beltway 8 at South Post Oak

Priority 2: District Gateways at intersections without a major bus route:

- South Main Street/US 90 A at Hillcroft Avenue
- South Main Street/US 90A at Fondren Street
- Beltway 8 at Fondren Street
- Beltway 8 at Hillcroft Avenue

Priority 3: District Gateways at intersections where roadway extensions are planned should be completed along with those projects:

- Buffalo Speedway at Holmes Road
- Airport Boulevard at SH-288

3. Implement Bayou and Access Point Projects in Coordination with the Houston Parks Department and Bayou Greenways Initiative

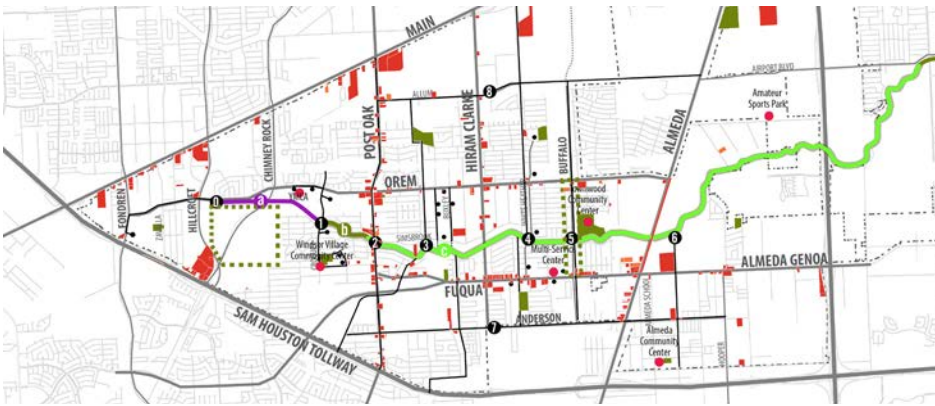
Improvements to Sims Bayou have been funded as part of the Bayou Greenways project. Construction projects have already begun on several stretches of the Bayou within 5 Corners, and the entire length will be completed within 7 years. Projects that create connections to Sims Bayou should be completed in coordination with the larger Bayou Greenways Initiative to maximize impact and efficiency. Eight projects are suggested, each with a cost range of \$220-350,000:

Hillcroft Street	Croquet Street	White Heather Drive	Alameda Road
Chimney Rock Road	Stancliff Street	Buffalo Speedway	Kirby Drive*

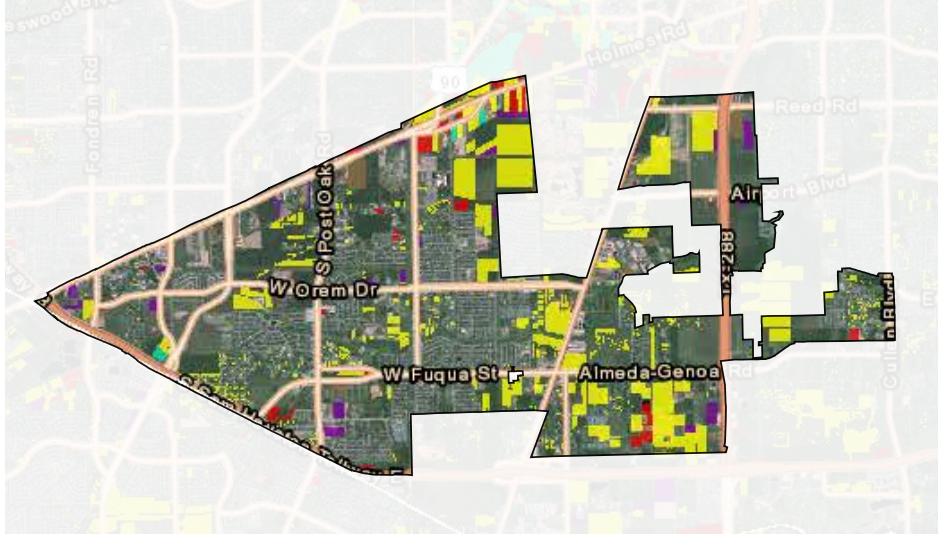
*denotes new streets or intersections recommended as part of the master plan



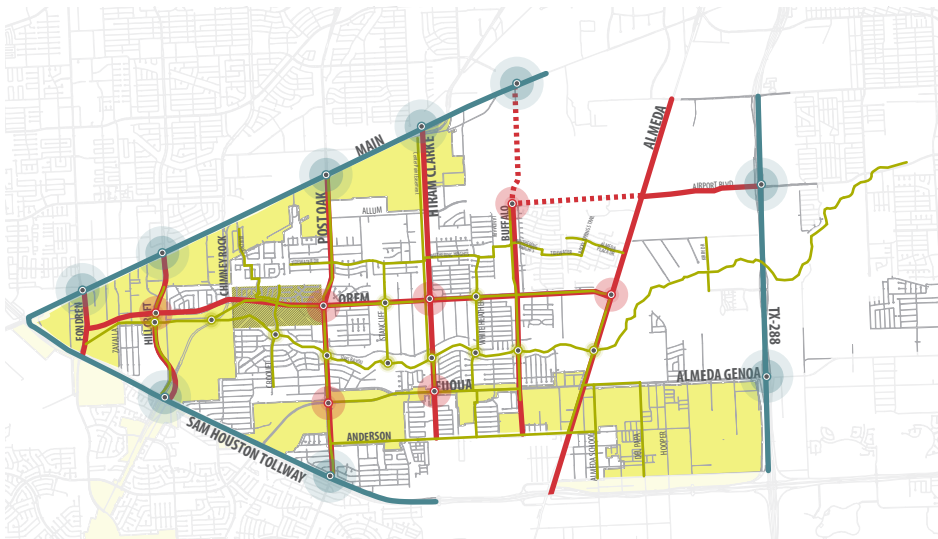
District Gateway Projects, Linear Parks and Key Intersection projects along transit corridors should be prioritized.



Connections to Sims Bayou should be coordinated with improvements planned and funded as part of the Bayou Greenways Initiative and COH Parks Department.



Projected New Residential, Commercial and Industrial Development for 2040. Source: H-GAC



The area covered by TIRZ #25 and TIRZ #9 may also influence which order projects can be implemented in

4. Linear Park Projects:

- Priority 1: Linear Park along the Buffalo Speedway esplanade (West Orem Road to West Fuqua Street)
Estimated Cost Range: \$900,000 - 1.2 million
- Priority 2: Linear Park along the West Orem Road esplanade (Hiram Clarke Road to Buffalo Speedway)
Estimated Cost Range: \$1 - 1.3 million
- Priority 3: Linear Park along Centerpoint Easement adjacent to (east of) Hiram Clarke Rd. (Allum Road to Sims Bayou)
Estimated Cost Range: \$1.9 - 2.5 million
- Priority 4: Linear Park along the West Orem Road esplanade (Buffalo Speedway to Alameda Road)
Estimated Cost Range: \$1.1 - 1.4 million

5. Key Intersection Projects

The seven suggested Major Intersection sites should be completed last, due to their relative cost and complexity. However, projects may gain increased priority if significant new development is planned in the vicinity. Each Key Intersection is projected to cost \$650-950,000

- Priority 1: The intersections of West Orem Drive at South Post Oak and West Orem Drive at Hiram Clarke should be given priority due to their high volume of traffic, location along major bus lines, proximity to Sims Bayou improvements. Because of the potential to attract new development and create a commercial center at these intersections, these projects may also be coordinated with new development.
- Priority 2: The intersections of West Orem Drive at Hillcroft, West Orem Drive at Alameda, West Fuqua at South Post Oak, and Alameda-Genoa at Alameda should be given secondary priority
- Priority 3: The intersections of South Post Oak at Allum and Buffalo Speedway at Airport Boulevard should be coordinated with the planned extensions of Buffalo Speedway and Airport Boulevard.

