



Southeast



Corridor-specific Report

Phase II and III
City of Houston

May 2008

The **Planning** Partnership
in collaboration with:

- Asakura Robinson Company
- Gunda Corporation
- Cushman & Wakefield LePage
- Working Partner



Foreword



CITY OF HOUSTON

Planning Commission

Bill White

Mayor

Carol Lewis Ph.D.
Chair
P.O. Box 1562
Houston, Texas 77251-1562

T. 832.393.0968
F. 713.313.1923
www.houstontx.gov

June 27, 2008

Dear Urban Corridor Planning participants,

It is an exciting and interesting time for the City's Urban Corridor Planning initiative.

After a long and productive process, the work of our consultants is coming to a close. They conducted a vast amount of research into the neighborhoods and conditions along METRO's light rail corridors, engaged in a thoughtful conversation with the community through a series of public workshops, and put tremendous effort into producing ideas and recommendations. These ideas and recommendations are contained in reports that we are now releasing.

In addition to our consultants' work, we have received input from ongoing dialogue with our Stakeholder Group, citizens and businesses in the corridors, and the real estate and development community. We are considering all of this input as we determine how we will go forward with modified City policies for development and infrastructure. Whatever we adopt, it has to make sense for Houston. Therefore, it is important to understand that actual development and infrastructure policies drafted by the City may differ from the guidelines presented in the consultants' reports.

The City will continue working to develop new policies that will smoothly integrate the Urban Corridors concepts into our communities. We look forward to the continued involvement of our citizens and businesses as we move ahead.

Sincerely,

Carol Abel Lewis, Ph.D.
Chair, Houston Planning Commission

Houston Planning Commission

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Executive Summary **Urban Corridor Planning**

Southeast Corridor

This Report for the Southeast Corridor should be read in conjunction with the Urban Corridor Planning Report. While the Urban Corridor Planning Report provides an overview of issues and recommendations that are common to all of the six Urban Corridors, this report provides specificity to the Southeast Corridor.

The study process included a background analysis of the existing Corridor, interviews with stakeholders throughout the Southeast Corridor, working sessions with residents and landowners in the Southeast Corridor, and extensive consultation with the stakeholder group and the City of Houston staff.

While there are many common characteristics between the various Corridors, each has distinctive features. The Southeast Corridor is the home to major institutions that serve the entire City of Houston, including the University of Houston Central Campus and Texas Southern University. In addition, the Corridor has a direct link to downtown and the Main Street Corridor. This report includes observations about the existing conditions in the Corridor, new directions for future development and recommendations specific to the Southeast Corridor.

Context/Background Analysis

The first part of this report examines the existing conditions and planned initiatives for the Corridor and establishes the framework for a Corridor-specific planning strategy.

Block Pattern

An important characteristic of the Southeast Corridor is the relatively small blocks that predominate from the downtown to Wheeler Street. The scale of the blocks provides the ideal opportunity for development to occur in manageable phases. In addition, the amount of development will occur in increments that will allow the community to adjust to increased densities. Furthermore, the types of development that are likely to occur will provide an easy transition to the surrounding neighborhoods protecting the stable residential areas from wholesale redevelopment.

Pedestrian Realm

Sidewalks are in poor condition and often interrupted due to the number of driveways and service access points along the Corridor. Further, no pedestrian amenities – including pedestrian level lighting, wide sidewalks, trash receptacles or street trees – exist for a large part of the Corridor.

Demographics

The population age is balanced between persons under 25 years of age (39%) and persons between 25-54 years of age (44%). The average household size is 2.64 persons. The Southeast Corridor has among the oldest housing stock of the six Corridors and has the lowest average income of the Corridors studied. In terms of tenure, 37% of households are owner occupied, while 63% are renters.

Southeast Corridor Planning Strategy

Based on the existing conditions along the Corridor, a strategy has been developed for the integration of new forms of development that includes a number of different conditions.

A key component of the Southeast Corridor Planning Strategy is the Land Development Concept Plan that divides the Corridor into Development Opportunity Areas (those areas where Transit Oriented Development is most probable and should be promoted and focused) and Stable Areas (where an emphasis should be placed on protecting and enhancing the physical character of stable residential neighborhoods). The Southeast Corridor is divided into the following three Land Development Concept categories:

Development Opportunity Area 1 – Corridor

This is concentrated in a few key locations along the Corridor, including at Scott Street north of Highway 5, at the intersection of MLK Boulevard at Old Spanish Trail and at the Palm Center. These areas are likely experience Transit Oriented mixed use development and medium density residential development.

Development Opportunity Area 2 - Downtown

This includes the area adjacent to the downtown, which will likely see large scale redevelopment activity due to the new transit facilities and its proximity to Houston's core.



Stable Areas

This includes those areas with existing low density housing along Scott Street and MLK Boulevard.

Demonstration Plans

Based on the Land Development Concept Plan, four demonstration plans were developed for sites along the Corridor that demonstrate the scale and nature that Transit Oriented Design might take. The sites include the Palm Center, the intersection of MLK Boulevard and Old Spanish Trail, Scott Street at the University of Houston, and Scott Street just south of Highway 5. The plans demonstrate a variety of block sizes and development scenarios.

Recommendations for Implementation

The final component of this Report is a series of recommended design guidelines that are intended to eventually form the basis of the City's new planning regime for Transit Oriented Development. The guidelines correspond with the Development Opportunity Areas as delineated by the Land Development Concept Plan and provide a series of mandatory requirements, performance standards and optional guidelines for the design of pedestrian realm, buildings, parking, access and service facilities, as well as engineering standards.

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Introduction

The Southeast Corridor has a number of physical characteristics in common with the North and East Corridors, however it is distinct in a number of ways. The Corridor is the home to major institutions that serve the entire City of Houston. In addition, this Corridor has a direct link to downtown and Main Street. As the Corridor approaches the downtown along Rusk Street and Capital Street, the blocks are smaller within a grid pattern of streets. The downtown segment of this line was the home to industrial uses resulting in easily developed parcels in proximity to the core of Houston.

The Corridor passes close to the universities on Scott Street. Small lots characterize the street with sparse development between Highway 45 to Elgin Street. This portion of the Corridor can easily be redeveloped over time with infill mixed use development at a small scale, as illustrated in the demonstration plan for this area. The advantage of this condition is that the redevelopment of the Transit Street will be contained to the street's edge and, by its nature and scale, will protect the adjacent low-density residential to the west from wholesale redevelopment.

South of the University of Houston where Martin Luther King Boulevard intersects with Old Spanish Trail, as well as at the Palm Center, there are opportunities to create new development that will be of benefit not only to the surrounding community but also to the Transit System. Both of these locations are at stations and are illustrated in the demonstration plans.

The Corridor-specific Report develops a strategy for encouraging the forms of development that will be supportive of transit, as well as creates pedestrian scaled streets that lead from the surrounding neighborhoods to the Transit Street. The report also suggests that most development will occur within a five-minute walk of the stations. This will result in large portions of the Corridor that will develop over time. These have been described as stable neighborhoods and, because of their distance from the stations, are less likely to face redevelopment pressure. In addition, the Southeast Corridor has a number of historic buildings and neighborhoods that need to be enhanced as redevelopment occurs. The advent of transit in this Corridor should be viewed as an opportunity to strengthen its historic assets.

An approach to infill development and the attendant ordinance controls and urban design guidelines advance the concept that different forms of development should be designed to respect the adjacent neighborhoods.

1 Context/Background Analysis

This chapter provides the context and background for the Southeast Corridor.

C1.1

Southeast Urban Corridor Study Area

The Southeast Urban Corridor starts in the downtown, moving east along Texas Avenue and Capitol Street. The Southeast Corridor continues south down Scott Street to the University of Houston campus. Beyond the University, the Southeast Corridor briefly shifts east down Wheeler Street before moving south down Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The Southeast Corridor terminates at the Palm Center east of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard on Griggs Road.

The Southeast Corridor is approximately 5.5 miles long. The boundaries of the Southeast Urban Corridor Study Area – measured at a ¼ mile on either side of the proposed transit line – are shown on the adjacent map.

All Transit Street and station locations in this report are based on information provided by METRO and the City of Houston as of December, 2007.



Streetscape on Capitol looking west toward downtown



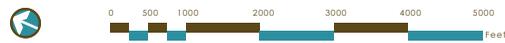
University of Houston residences on the south side of Wheeler



Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. looking south toward Old Spanish Trail

Urban Corridor Study Area Southeast

- Southeast Transit Street
- Connecting Transit Street
- Corridor Study Area
- 5 Minute Walking Distance to Station





Industrial use on Rusk, looking west toward downtown



Commercial establishment along Scott, south of Clay



View of sidewalk and vacant site, south of IH 45

C1.2

The Context of the Southeast Corridor

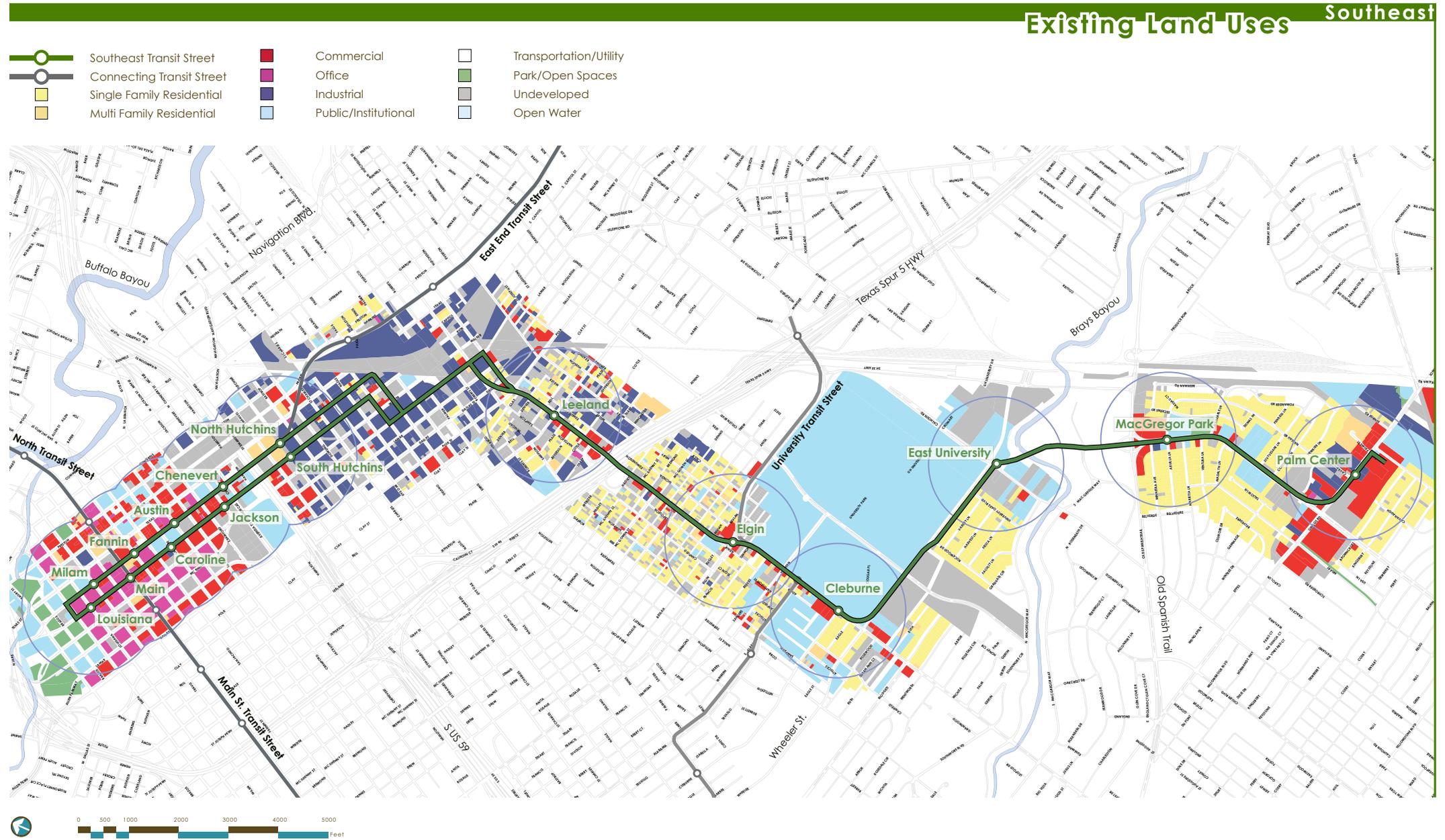
Part of this Urban Corridor Planning study is to understand the common and unique characters of each Urban Corridor. Four elements that define the area are the land uses, the size and scale of buildings, the pedestrian realm and infrastructure in the study area.

C1.2.1 Land Use

The map on the opposite page illustrates the range of existing land uses along the Southeast Urban Corridor. The area is composed of industrial and employment uses, single and multi-family residential uses, retail and service commercial uses, parks and open space as well as two major university campuses (institutional) with ancillary uses.



New townhouse development at Bastrop, between Rusk and St. Charles





Small building footprints along Scott, north of IH 45



Medium sized building fronting Griggs Road, west of Cavanaugh



New residential development on Griggs Road, east of Beekman

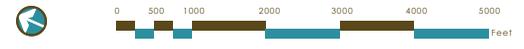
C1.2.2 Building Footprint

The map on the facing page illustrates the size and scale of buildings found in the Southeast Corridor. All existing buildings have been shaded to help create a picture of the pattern created by different buildings, streets and open space - or the area's urban fabric.

The typical small downtown block dimensions of 250 by 250 ' extend from the northwest edge of the Southeast Corridor along Scott Street to Elgin Avenue. North of the I-45, the building footprints generally reveal half block and full block developments, consistent with employment and new higher density residential developments. South of the I-45, the pattern of building footprints reveal the prominence of single detached homes and small and medium-scale commercial buildings along the frontage of the Transit Street. As the Corridor continues south down Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, the block dimensions shift to a rectangular shape, with building footprints illustrating the continued mix of low density residential neighborhoods and commercial buildings fronting along the Transit Street.

Existing Building Footprints Southeast

- Southeast Transit Street
- Connecting Transit Street
- Building Footprint
- 5 Minute Walking Distance to Station



Park	Acquired	Acres	Park Class
Market Square Park	1964	1.43	Plaza/Square
Old City Hall Clock Plaza	1995	0.01	CBD Non-Park Sites
Wortham Center-Fish Plaza	1987	0.01	CBD Non-Park Sites
Sesquicentennial Park	1988	4	Plaza/Square
Buffalo Bayou/Tinsley Park	1981	124.1	Linear
Jones Hall Public Plaza	1966	0.01	CBD Non-Park Sites
Jones Plaza	1964	1.43	Plaza/Square
Sam Houston Park	1899	19.7	Cultural/Historical
City Hall Annex Plaza	1960	0.01	CBD Non-Park Sites
City Hall Plaza	1939	0.01	CBD Non-Park Sites
Tranquility Park	1979	4.3	Plaza/Square
Hermann Square	1913	1.43	Plaza/Square
Root Memorial Square Park	1925	1.43	Plaza/Square
Minute Maid Park	1999	28.97	CBD Non-Park Sites
Settegast Park	1911	4.1	Community
Leroy (Moses) Park	1969	0.78	Pocket
Malone (Zurrie M.) Park	1973	0.69	Pocket
Diez Street Park	1993	9.37	Community
MacGregor Park	1925	82.79	Regional
MacGregor Parkway	1930	100	Linear
Beekman Street Park	2004	0.36	Pocket

Target Acquisition Area/Parks

Buffalo Bayou Parkway/Trails
Brays Bayou Parkway/Trails
Potential pocket park, Tuam at Scott

Other Park Projects of Note

Discovery Green Park-Under Construction, 11.78 Acres
Proposed Palm Center Park (Beekman Park expansion)
Potential soccer stadium
Potential open space enhancements at I-45 and US-59
Shenzhen Garden Project

C1.2.3 Pedestrian Realm/Mobility Inventory

Parks

The Southeast Corridor provides public access to many CBD open space/park/plaza areas including the historical Sam Houston Park. Also located within the Corridor is Discovery Green, a Metro level park currently under construction adjacent to the George R. Brown Convention Center.

The 82.79 acre Macgregor Park straddles the proposed Transit Street along Martin Luther King Boulevard near the University of Houston and Texas Southern University campuses.

The Southeast Corridor enjoys access to Buffalo Bayou and Brays Bayou linear open space systems. These urban Bayous provide canoeing, fishing, hiking and biking with access to densely vegetated areas.

Many City of Houston community center parks offer after school and summer enrichment programs, summer food service programs and teen camps, as well as teen, adult and senior recreation programs. Community center parks and other community facilities in the vicinity of the Southeast Corridor include:

- Emancipation Community Center
- MacGregor Community Center
- Settegast Community Center
- Third Ward Multi-Service Center
- YMCA at Palm Center

In general, sidewalks providing access to parks and community facilities within the Southeast Corridor are in need of maintenance and repair. Sidewalk widths, generally 4', are inadequate to provide for current and anticipated pedestrian traffic. Exceptions to poor sidewalk conditions occur in many parts of the CBD and UofH/TSU areas.

An Alameda/OST TIRZ sponsored sidewalk project along Old Spanish Trail and Griggs Road is currently under construction within the Corridor area.

Publicly Accessible Open Space

Other park-like areas of non-City ownership often allow public access. The University of Houston and Texas Southern University provide numerous park-like and plaza open spaces serving both students, faculty and the public.

Sidewalks

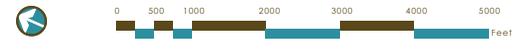
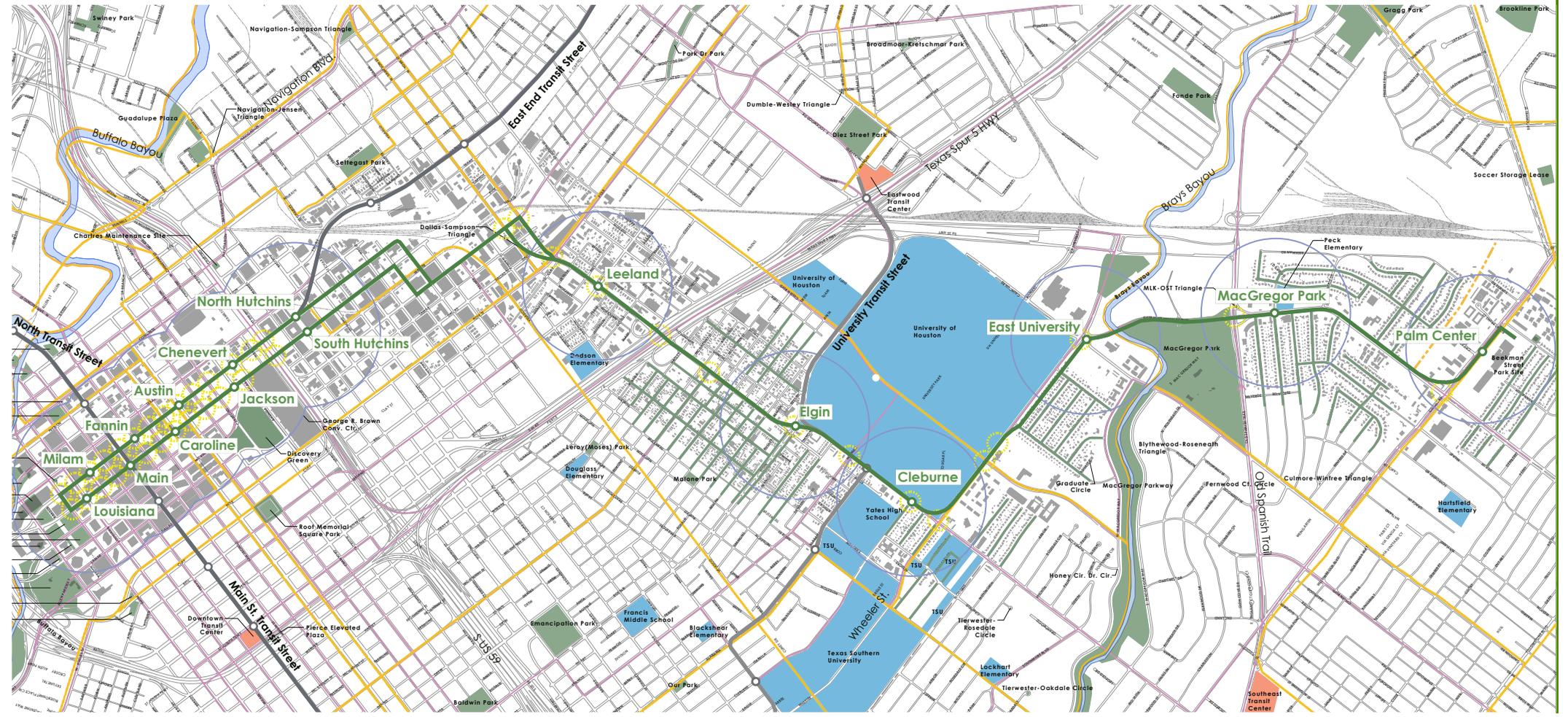
Areas of the Southeast Corridor located within the downtown CBD (west of US-59) generally enjoy a well developed and functional pedestrian realm.

The University of Houston and Texas Southern University areas are also more developed within the pedestrian realm throughout the campuses.

Most deficient in pedestrian realm function are areas between downtown and the university campuses and near the Palm Center Station. These transition areas often lack continuous sidewalk systems due to the interjections

Existing Pedestrian Realm/Mobility Southeast

- | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| Bayou | Cemetery | Trail/Bikeway | Pedestrian Signalized Crossing | Building Footprint | Southeast Transit Street | 5 Minute Walking Distance to Station |
| Schools | Institutional Buildings | Tree Lined Streets | MT Major Thoroughfare per COH Major Thoroughfare Plan 2006 | Connecting Transit Street | | |
| Open Space | Metro Transit Center | Bus Routes | | | | |





Existing sidewalk along Scott St.



Existing street furniture on MLK Blvd. along MacGregor Park



Existing streetscape along Scott St. in front of the University of Houston

of driveways, parking lots and fences. These areas also generally lack street furnishings, pedestrian lighting, street trees and shade.

The more stable residential area between MacGregor Park and Griggs Road typically have paved streets, cement curbs, large street trees, but no sidewalks.

Community Facilities

Schools - Schools are dependant on pedestrian and bicycle mobility in order for students to safely and efficiently arrive and depart Southeast Corridor schools. Public schools within the Southeast Corridor are administered by the Houston Independent School District (HISD).

The SPARK School Park Program is a non-profit organization which increases park space by developing public school grounds into neighborhood parks. SPARK Parks within the Southeast Corridor Area are located at Dodson Elementary, Douglass Elementary, Lockhart Elementary and Peck Elementary.

Other facilities accessed by pedestrians -

Several significant public facilities within the Southeast Corridor rely on safe and continuous sidewalks for optimum access. These public facilities include:

- Numerous CBD public buildings
- The Theater District and underground tunnel/parking system
- Toyota Center and Minute Maid Park and extensive parking lots/garages
- The G.R. Brown Convention Center and area hotels
- The US Customs House and Federal Detention Center at Capitol

- City of Houston Library on Scott Street
- Houston Post Office on Franklin
- "Justice Square" Harris County Court Buildings
- Palm Center Library, Police Station and Post Office
- Numerous churches including Wheeler Baptist Church and Holman Street Baptist Church.

Currently, area schools and other significant public facilities are not adequately served by safe and ample sidewalks except within the CBD and UofH/TSU areas.

Streetscape

Street trees - The CBD, Wheeler and many University streets benefit from mature street tree plantings. Street trees species primarily consist of Live Oaks whose shallow root systems exacerbate sidewalk maintenance needs in the Corridor.

Recent tree planting programs by non-profit organizations within the area include:

- Martin Luther King Boulevard
- Scott Street Esplanades

The 2004 Cotswold Project focused on pedestrian enhancements, streetscapes, and street improvements in a 90-block area in the northeast sector of downtown. Featured amenities included fountains, public art, wider sidewalks, and street trees.

The Main Street Square, a pedestrian plaza in the heart of downtown Houston was also completed in 2004. This area includes a 250' reflecting pool with water jets, trees, public art, banners and upgraded sidewalks.

Also completed in 2004, the 7 1/2- mile at-grade light rail line Main Street Rail Line was developed and constructed by the Metropolitan Transit Authority. Associated pedestrian realm enhancements include upgraded sidewalks and pull outs, brick pavers, special streetlights, drinking fountains, additional landscaping, and a street clock.

In the Southeast sector of downtown, pedestrian walkways have been upgraded through the Southeast Quadrant Streetscapes Improvements project. Improvements include new street pavement, improved drainage, sidewalks, trees and landscaping, removal of overhead utilities and traffic signal upgrades.

Outside of the above projects areas and the university areas, street furnishings such as benches, trash receptacles, recycle bins, bollards and bicycle racks are rarely visible within the Corridor today.

Pedestrian oriented lighting provides a safer and more attractive environment for night-time use of pedestrian realm areas. Pedestrian level lighting rarely exists within the Corridor outside of the CBD and campus areas. Currently, street lights and a few attached fixtures to building facades provide the only ambient lighting along pedestrian walkways.

Public Art

Public art adds an element of pride and interest to the pedestrian realm. In 1999, the City of Houston established an ordinance mandating that 1.75% of qualified Capital Improvement Project monies be set aside for civic art.

Public art works located within the Southeast Corridor include:

-  George H.W. Bush statue in Sesquicentennial Park
-  Museum of Cultural Arts, Houston (MOCAH) mural project at Lockhart Elementary School SPARK Park, 1999
-  Two Medallions, located downtown along Texas Avenue, in the sidewalk of the north side of the Fannin and San Jacinto intersections.
-  "Movement" located downtown on Prairie at Travis.
-  "MacGregor Monument" Located in MacGregor Park, near the University of Houston.
-  "Peggy", 1927 Bronze and White Granite Sculpture by Borglum, John Gutzon (1867 - 1941) located at MacGregor Park

Mobility

Crosswalks - Demarcation of crosswalks at key intersections provide safe and visible pedestrian crossings of public rights-of-way. Crosswalks exist at many signaled intersections along the Southeast Corridor Transit Street; however, several key intersections are in need of signalized pedestrian crosswalks.

Bikeways/Trails - The Houston Bikeway Program provides a 345-mile bikeway network for urban cycling that spans across a 500 square-mile area of the city. This bikeway network is integrated into the overall transportation system. Several City of Houston bike lanes are located along Preston, Polk, Caroline, Austin, Bastrop, Walker, Velasco, York, Sampson, Cullen, Wheeler, Brays Bayou and Griggs rights-of-way. These bike lanes are often narrow and do not meet current AASHTO standards for recommended bike lane widths and demarcation.

Two Rail-to-Trail designated bikeways serve the Southeast Corridor area: Columbia Tap and Harrisburg-Sunset Trail.

The Columbia Tap Trail is a Rails-to-Trails consisting of over 4 miles of a 10 ' wide, concrete, multi-use hike and bike trail along the old Columbia Tap railroad. The trail extends from Dixie Drive past Polk Street and into downtown, creating a greenway corridor in the Third Ward and downtown area.

The Harrisburg-Sunset Trail is also a Rails-to-Trails project consisting of over 5 miles of trail and on-street bikeways just east of downtown Houston. This 10 ' asphalt trail is lit and runs from Drennan to Hidalgo Park. The on-street portion of the trail runs from Commerce and McKee to Avenue H and West Hendrick. A future designated connection at S. 70th Street will connect the Harrisburg-Sunset Trail to Brays Bayou.

Public Transit - Existing transit options within the Southeast Corridor include METRO bus, Greyhound Bus and Amtrak Train Services. Current METRO bus lines include commuter and local lines running between the Downtown Transit Center, Wheeler Station, Eastwood, TMC, Magnolia, Gulfgate and Southeast Transit Centers. Due to proximity to downtown and UofH/TSU campuses, many bus lines run throughout the Corridor.

The downtown Greyhound Bus Station is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is located on Main Street at Gray. The Amtrak Train Station is located downtown near Washington and Bagby.



Service Poles and street condition looking down Scott, south of IH 45



Homes along Reeves, west of Scott



View of wooden service poles and train looking north up Sampson

C1.2.4 Engineering/Infrastructure Inventory

Existing Roadway Conditions

The Southeast Corridor's study area is bounded by three freeways: IH-610, IH-45 and SH-288, which form a rough triangle around the study area. The level of service for the intersections within the Southeast Corridor, for the areas both inside and outside downtown is at acceptable levels of service (C or better).

Existing Watermains

The typical life of a water main is 40-50 years. It is clear that the segments extending from Hutchins Street at both Capitol and Rusk Street to the Alabama/Wheeler Streets intersection are at the end of their life span and will require replacement soon. The age of some segments is not available from the City's GIMS database.

Existing Sanitary Sewer Lines

The typical life of a sewer line is typically 30 to 40 years, unless the lines are rehabilitated. From the City's GIMS database, it appears that there are several sewer lines that are older than 40 years. It is not clear if these lines have been rehabilitated. This includes segments from Louisiana at Capital and Rusk to the intersection of LaBranch as well Napoleon Street from Leeland to Bremond. Though construction dates are unknown, it is recommended that the condition assessment of sewer lines be done for sewers that are more than 30 years by closed circuit television inspection.

Existing Storm Sewer Lines

The storm sewer lines have been identified along the proposed alignment of the LPA for sizes 30" and larger in diameter. Current City regulations require storm water detention for all new development. Hence, any new developments that are proposed will be required to design for storm water detention.

Existing Lighting

Currently along the proposed Southeast Corridor, only Wheeler Street, Martin Luther King Boulevard, and Griggs Road have an existing continuous lighting system. The existing poles range from 20 to 25' in height and are mounted on breakaway bases that are founded on drilled shafts. Existing poles are spaced between 120 to 160' and are staggered on opposite sides of the road. Poles are mounted behind the roadway curb at varying distances depending on site conditions. Lights exist along Scott Street; however, these lights are sporadic and most are mounted on wooden service poles. It is assumed that existing lighting meets current standards.

Summary

The existing character of the area is predominantly residential, which suggests that an analysis of existing capacity, to accept more intense redevelopment, is necessary. The existing services are old and it appears that the majority of the water mains and sewer lines are beyond their normal life expectancy. It would be wise to consider a program to replace primary services at the same time as the work is being done to install transit.

Socio-Economic Profile - Southeast Corridor		
		% Share
Total Population	71,717	
Total Households	21,014	
Population Age Profile:		
Age 0 - 4	4,912	6.8%
Age 5 - 9	4,402	6.1%
Age 10 - 14	4,301	6.0%
Age 15 - 17	2,601	3.6%
Age 18 - 20	5,974	8.3%
Age 21 - 24	5,951	8.3%
Age 25 - 34	12,502	17.4%
Age 35 - 44	10,954	15.3%
Age 45 - 49	4,541	6.3%
Age 50 - 54	3,775	5.3%
Age 55 - 59	2,955	4.1%
Age 60 - 64	2,430	3.4%
Age 65 - 74	3,568	5.0%
Age 75 - 84	2,184	3.0%
Age 85+	667	0.9%
Median Age	31.2	
Average Age	33.8	
Household Size Profile:		
1 Person	7,381	35.1%
2 Person	5,200	24.7%
3 Person	2,924	13.9%
4 Person	2,282	10.9%
5 Person	1,478	7.0%
6 Person	873	4.2%
7+ Person	876	4.2%
Average Household Size	2.64	
Period of Housing Construction:		
Built 1999 to 2006	3,962	15.8%
Built 1995 to 1998	680	2.7%
Built 1990 to 1994	524	2.1%
Built 1980 to 1989	979	3.9%
Built 1970 to 1979	1,852	7.4%
Built 1960 to 1969	3,862	15.4%
Built 1950 to 1959	5,180	20.7%
Built 1940 to 1949	3,709	14.8%
Built 1939 or Earlier	4,266	17.1%
Median Year Built	1959	
Owner Occupied Households	7,756	36.9%
Renter Occupied Households	13,258	63.1%
Household Income Range:		
< \$25,000	9,899	47.1%
\$25,000 - \$49,999	5,425	25.8%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	2,544	12.1%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	1,205	5.7%
\$100,000+	1,942	9.2%
Median Household Income	\$27,548	

Source: Claritas

C1.3

Southeast Corridor Demographic Market Overview

Demographic Overview

The methodology for generating the demographic profile was consistent for all of the Corridors examined – a one-mile buffer around the length of the Transit Street was generated from geographic information systems (GIS) files, and socio-economic data for all residents within this zone were analyzed, extrapolated from the 2005 Census using Claritas data. The rationale is that this sample draws upon not only the residents in the immediate area of influence of the Corridor infrastructure improvements, but also adjacent neighborhoods that will see secondary benefits (proximity to higher-order transit, improved commercial-retail facilities over time, improved pedestrian realm and civic spaces, etc.).

The Southeast Corridor area has a population of approximately 72,000 persons. The median age level is 31.2 years old, and the population age profile is balanced; persons under the age of 25 account for a 39% share of the local population in the Southeast Corridor, while persons aged 25 to 55 (prime income earning years) account for a 44% share of the total.

The average household size in the Southeast Corridor is 2.64 persons, which places it in the middle among the six Corridors being examined, which range from 3.26 down to 1.79 persons per household. Households with one or two persons account for a 60% share of the total, while households of five or more persons account for a 15% share.

The Southeast Corridor has among the oldest housing stock among the six Corridors being examined. Homes built since 1990 account for just a 21% share of the total, while homes built pre-1970 represent a 68% share. This compares to an average of 21% and 54% share, respectively, for the total sample of housing across the six Corridors. Some 37% of homes are owner-occupied, and 63% are renter-occupied.

In examining household income levels, the Southeast Corridor ranks lowest among the six Corridors being examined. With a median household income level of \$27,550, nearly three-quarters of area households have an income level of less than \$50,000 annually, and approximately 47% earn less than \$25,000 per year.

Neighborhood Description

The Southeast Corridor is part of Study Area 5 (as is the East Corridor), analyzed as part of a Land Use and Demographic Profile prepared by the City's Planning and Development Department in 2003. The Southeast Corridor itself principally comprises two neighborhoods: Eastwood Lawndale and Lawndale/Wayside. The following is a brief area description.

- Eastwood/Lawndale is a middle class community located to the southeast of the downtown area. The area was once exclusively Anglophone, but is now largely Hispanic. The Gulf Freeway creates a commercial edge on its south border.
- Lawndale/Wayside is a collection of neighborhoods which still reflect the area's origins as a prestigious east side neighborhood. The areas of Forest Hill, Idylwood and Mason Park are shady, middle class havens with curving streets and large lots. The presence of wooded preserves such as the large Forest Park Cemetery, Villa De Matel convent, Mason Park and Wortham Golf Center – the city's first country club – have helped to maintain the area's beauty.

The following land use characteristics are identified for Study Area 5:

- Study Area 5 has a total land area of 26,368 acres. It is mainly residential and industrial. Major highways connecting the area are: I-10 in an east-west direction, US 59 (north-south), US-45 (southwest-southeast), Loop 610 to the north and east, and SH 288 in the south.

- Single-family residential uses declined by about 5% between 1990 and 2000, though still represent more than 20% of the Study Area. This decrease in single-family is visible in the Third Ward area, which is located in the southern portion of the Study Area; and in the greater Fifth Ward, located in the northwestern portion of the Study Area. These older neighborhoods and others, such as Magnolia Park, consist of small bungalows mixed with industrial and commercial uses interspersed with vacant lots. New single-family development is concentrating in an area between US 59, Wayside Dr. and I-10.

- Multi-family developments are scattered within the single-family areas, and increased 8% overall from 1990-2000. Multi-family uses cover 385 acres in the Study Area. Between 1990 and 2000, thirteen apartment complexes with a total of more than 1,200 units were permitted in the Study Area, three of them on Lyons Avenue in the Fifth Ward.

- Commercial and Office land uses make up 3.1% of the Study Area. Commercial space, with 944 acres in 1990, decreased to about 723 acres in 2000. On the other hand, office space increased from 78.4 acres in 1990 to almost 94 acres in 2000. Most commercial land is located along north-south and east-west commercial Corridors. Prominent north-south corridors include Lyons Road, Navigation Boulevard and Canal Street. Telephone Road is another Corridor that runs in a NW-SE direction. North-South Corridors include Dowling Street, Jensen Drive, Lockwood Drive and Wayside. Office sites are located along US 45 south and on Market Street. Between 1990 and 2000 commercial development was permitted mainly in the areas of Harrisburg, Canal, Wayside and Macario, and along Lyons Drive. Two office projects valued at \$1 million and above were permitted; one on Lyons Avenue and another on Lawndale Street.

- Industrial uses in Study Area 5 cover 4,070 acres (15.4% of the land), which makes it the second largest group of industrial areas of all the Study Areas. These uses increased almost 24% between 1990 and 2000. Industrial land in Study Area 5 is primarily consumed by the manufacturing and petrochemical processing industries, which dominate the eastern portion of the city. Industrial districts in this part of the city were planned during the 1930's and 1940's and are a feature along the Ship Channel. In the last decade, new manufacturing plants and warehouses have appeared in the central portion of the Study area between US 45, I-10 and Loop 610.

- Public and Institutional land is more concentrated in the south of the Study Area with the presence of Texas Southern University, University of Houston and the Port of Houston/Ship Channel. Public and Institutional land occupies 1,747 acres, or 6.6%, of the total land. In the 1990's an array of new churches and church related facilities, including educational facilities, were permitted in the mainly residential areas. These new developments and the expansion of Texas Southern University and the University of Houston accounted for most of the growth in institutional land uses from 736 acres in 1990 to 1,747 acres in 2000.

- Transportation and Utilities comprise 0.8% of the Study Area, with 205 acres of land mainly in railroads and small utility stations. During the 1990's, a new bus terminal was permitted on Harrisburg Boulevard. In addition, the City of Houston built two wastewater treatment plants and lift stations, and a wet weather facility. This last facility is located on Japhet Street and had a valuation of more than 10 million dollars.

- Parks and Open space accounted for 2.8% of the land in 2000. Parks are scarce in the area north of Buffalo Bayou and almost non-existent above I-10 and US 90. Linear parks and green space extend along Brays Bayou, including Mason Park with 102 acres and Gus Wortham Park with 161 acres.

- Vacant and Undeveloped land makes up 18.1% of the Study Area, somewhat less than single-family land uses. Large tracks are interspersed with industrial uses, mainly in the northeastern and eastern portions. In old neighborhoods, vacant lots are found intermingled in residential areas.

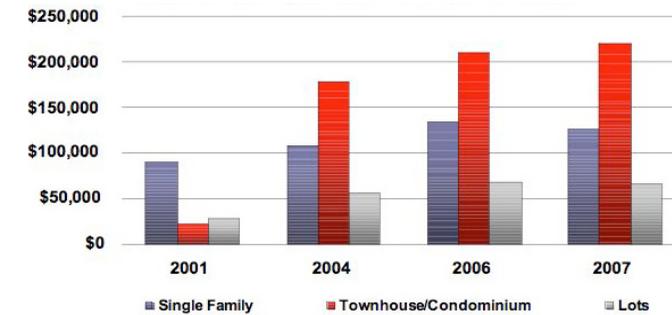
- Roads make up 22% of the Study Area, higher than the city-wide figure of 18%. Loop 610, I-45, I-10, US 59, and SH 288 all connect at some point in this Study Area.

Housing Market

The Southeast market is part of MLS District 4 (South). The average single family house price is roughly \$127,500, based upon Multiple Listing Service (MLS) data for 2007, compiled by the Houston Association of Realtors. At that time, the average townhouse/condominium sale price was close to \$221,000, reflecting the age and quality of stock being transacted. These values have increased in the range of 20% since 2004.

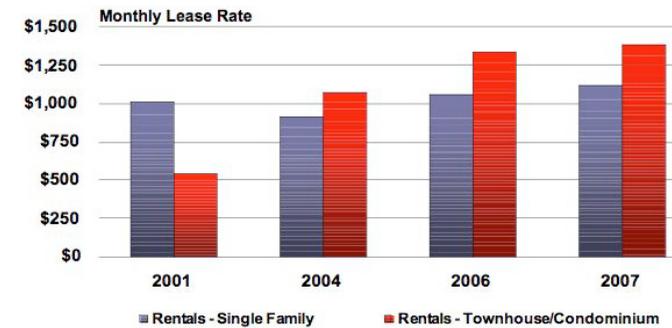
In the rental market, the single-family home rental rate was just less than \$1,130 per month, compared to \$1,400 in the townhouse/condominium segment of the market, in 2007. Rents are up approximately 5% from the same time one year ago.

Houston Association Of Realtors MLS Statistics
Average Price by Property Type
Southeast Corridor- MLS District 4 (South)



Source: Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University, Houston Association of Realtors
 Note: Data shown is annual

Houston Association Of Realtors MLS Statistics
Average Price (Lease Rate) by Property Type
Southeast Corridor- MLS District 4 (South)



Source: Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University, Houston Association of Realtors
 Note: Data shown is annual

C1.4

Summary of Initiatives

The Initiatives Plan compiles and maps all of the initiatives, projects and plans that have been prepared for lands in the study area. Many projects have been led by the OST/Alameda Tax Incremental Reinvestment Zone such as wastewater improvements and streetscape enhancements. The Southeast and East Downtown Management Districts have also played an important role in establishing service improvement plans. In addition to these, initiatives identified by participants in the workshop have been added.

A comprehensive picture emerges of the immense planning and development efforts undertaken in the Corridor to date and the geographical relationship between the initiatives and the Transit Streets and Stations. From a strategic stance, the Initiatives Plan provides a clearer sense of the location of priority areas within the Corridor and how future Transit Oriented Development objectives might be focused and positioned to build on existing initiatives and planning efforts.

Opportunity Areas

These locations identify sites that could be considered for redevelopment. Some sites located along the Transit Street are suitable for intensification with transit supportive uses. These locations were identified by workshop participants.

1. Downtown District

The downtown area is filled with redevelopment opportunities. This District is discussed in great detail in the Main Street Corridor-specific Report.

2. Sports and Convention District

This area has the potential to become an important shopping and tourism district. The George R. Brown Convention Center, Discovery Green (set to be completed in 2008), Minute Maid Park and the proposed soccer stadium are facilities that attract many people.

3. South of Highway 59 between IH 45 and the Railroad

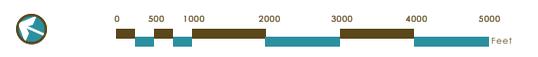
This District was identified as an area in transition with many opportunities for redevelopment. Several townhouse and mid-rise housing developments have recently been built in this part of the Corridor.

4. Land adjacent to Transit Street between McKinney St. and Wheeler St.

These sites are mainly under-used or vacant lots, which are suited for mixed use, Transit Oriented Development that would complement the campuses and adjacent residential neighborhoods. See demonstration plans in section C2.3.1.

Initiatives Southeast

- Southeast Transit Street
- Connecting Transit Street
- Proposed Pedestrian Realm
- Opportunity Area
- Stable Area
- Existing Open Space
- Proposed Open Space
- Opportunity District





Palm Center service node



MacGregor Park looking southeast towards woodlot and Old Spanish Trail

5. Scott St. at Wheeler St. Retail Area

Retail Concentration Areas have been identified in the Greater Southeast Management District market demand study for potential retail development (CDS Market Research). This area has a lack of quality shopping for residents and campus visitors. The proximity of this node to the Universities, residential neighborhoods, and the Transit Streets creates an attractive redevelopment opportunity that could provide basic goods and services.

6. Old Spanish Trail at Griggs Retail Area

The OST and Griggs Street node has also been identified as a Retail Concentration Area. Local residents are currently served by the Gulfgate Center, located approximately 3 miles from the intersection.

7. Between Pierce St. and Reeves St.

The proximity of this residential neighborhood to the Transit Streets and the IH 45, and the number of vacant lots available, make this an attractive opportunity area.

8. Wheeler St. and Scott St.

South of Cleburne Station, the Transit Street turns at Wheeler and Scott Street intersection. This corner is highly visible and has the potential to accommodate a higher density development with a pedestrian scale frontage.

9. East University Station - Northwest

The University of Houston Master Plan Open Space Framework Plan suggests that this parking lot be transformed into the Bayou Park Extension.

10. East University Station - Southwest

This University of Houston parking lot is located adjacent to a transit station - an ideal location for a mixed use development that would service the University community and surrounding neighborhoods.

11. East of MacGregor Park

The woodlot property across MacGregor Park has recently been purchased and is expected to be redeveloped.

12. Old Spanish Trail to Palm Center

Land adjacent to the eastern end of the Transit Street is suitable for Transit Oriented Development. Development along this stretch of the Corridor is a mix of institutional, commercial, residential, and some vacant lots. The combination of the wide right of way and deep setbacks creates an environment unwelcoming to pedestrians. See demonstration plans in section C2.3.1 for a potential solution.

13. Palm Center

This service node is an ideal site for transit supportive uses. Located near the highway and at the end of the Southeast Corridor, this large through site is suited for high density mixed use buildings and 2-4 level multi-family on the edges adjacent to residential neighborhoods. The Beekman Street Park is proposed for the northeast corner of the site. See demonstration plan in section C2.3.1.

Stable Areas

Workshop participants identified neighborhoods, schools and employment areas as Stable Areas. It is important to protect and enhance employment areas close to the transit stations so that employees can conveniently and safely walk to and from the stations. Neighborhoods should work with the City to evaluate the application of available tools to preserve Stable Areas or encourage redevelopment. Safe and convenient pedestrian connections to the Corridor will encourage ridership and help to support the new retail and service uses that may develop near the Stations. The following areas were identified as Stable Areas by workshop participants.

14. Neighborhood South of Ruth St. between Scott St. and Cullen Blvd

15. University Oaks Neighborhood

This deed-restricted neighborhood, adjacent to the University of Houston, has an organized homeowners' association, the University Oaks Civic Club.

16. Neighborhood west of MacGregor Station

17. Emancipation Park Area

This area has many cultural and historical assets to be protected: Row Houses, Progressive Armature Boxing Association (PABA), St. John Missionary Baptist Church, Grand Order of the Court of Calanthe, Original Yates High School building (Now Ryan Middle School), Eldorado Ballroom, Home of Flower-man, YMCA (Dr. John Biggers mural), Riverside General Hospital, Blackshear Elementary School, Sixth Church of Christ (only African-American Christian Science Church in Houston), Panther Party Headquarters (now a vacant lot), Jerusalem Baptist Church, Project Rowhouse and Emancipation Park.



Pedestrian Realm

The Southeast Corridor has several neighborhood, community and city scale parks and open spaces. Workshop participants identified several initiatives for open space. In addition, there has been a significant master plan completed for the University of Houston and Brays Bayou.

Existing Parks/Campuses:

18. Emancipation Park

The park has recently been designated a protected historic landmark under the Houston Preservation Ordinance. The designation means that the park will be protected for prosperity. This place is the first official public space in Texas and was originally conceived as a site for freed slaves to celebrate the anniversary of June 19, 1865, when Texas slaves were emancipated. The Friends of Emancipation Park are working to fix the park's neglected state.

19. University of Houston Master Plan

It is expected that the number of students will increase from 35,000 to 45,000 students in the next ten years. In response to this probable growth, the University has completed a planning strategy for the next twenty-years. The main objectives of the Master Plan are: double the learning space, double the living space, create districts for the arts, professionals and undergraduates and increase parking.

20. Texas Southern University Master Plan

The Master Plan for the campus of 11,000 students is a five-year blueprint for the maintenance, improvement and expansion of University facilities and grounds. Projected construction of new

buildings is based on planned growth of the student population and related program space needs. The University hopes to: acquire land for additional facilities, upgrade infrastructure and increase student services.

21. MacGregor Park

This 100-acre park provides a range of recreational activities for all users. The Friends of MacGregor Park are working to improve connections to and within the park. They are also planning on improving the play structures and enhancing pedestrian lighting.

Trails/Streetscape/Connections:

22. Columbia Tap Trail

A 4-mile hike and bike trail is being constructed along the old Columbia Tap railroad. Once completed, the trail will connect the neighborhoods to the existing bikeway network along Polk, McGowan and Alabama Streets, the Brays Bayou Trail, and the Dixie bike route.

23. Third Ward Connectivity Project

The goal of the Third Ward to Main Street Connectivity Project is to link residents of the Third Ward to the Main Street Corridor via corridors such as Elgin Street, Blodgett Street and Old Spanish Trail.

24. Transit Street

The pedestrian/cyclist environment along the Transit Street is a priority. Street furniture, lighting, bicycle racks and safe crossings are all part of an enhanced streetscape for the Corridor.

25. Reeves St.

An enhanced pedestrian connection on Reeves Street was suggested to better connect the community to Scott Street.

C1.5

Southeast Corridor Workshop

A two day workshop was held in April 2007 to engage area stakeholders and residents in Urban Corridor Planning.

The purpose of the first day of the workshop was to establish a common understanding of existing conditions and opportunities. During the day, the team met with representatives of City staff, and major landowners, to review the understanding of the context of the Corridor. During the evening session with the public, participants were asked to identify projects or initiatives that would enhance the area, as well as to help identify areas that could change and those that should be protected. As background, the Current Initiatives plan was presented at the workshop. It was a compilation of projects identified in previous strategies, plans and reports.

Each one of the table groups identified many opportunities in the Southeast Corridor that have been included in the Initiatives Plan (see Chapter C1.4). Suggestions of the participants, with respect to the pedestrian realm, redevelopment opportunities and areas to be protected included:

Pedestrian Realm

- improve connectivity to MacGregor Park
- walkway from University of Houston to MacGregor Park
- pedestrian connection on Old Spanish Trail (OST) between Calhoun & MLK
- include decorative lighting and an increased number of fixtures
- include historic remembrance, African-American art and cultural feel along the Corridor and Stations
- bicycle trails connected to Corridor along Brays Bayou, Columbia Tap (currently planned)
- build open spaces next to Minute Maid Stadium
- accessible connections
- connection to Yates High School

Redevelopment Opportunities

- west of the Transit Street from Elgin Street to Cleburne Street could accommodate mid-rise/higher density housing
- Leeland to Cleburne Streets - all of the area could be redeveloped
- economic development node opportunity near the YMCA
- woodlot across from MacGregor Park
- new soccer stadium at North Hutchins station proposed
- Cleburne Station could have new university development retail bottom parking at top
- mixed use development, multi-story with housing above
- create two districts (Sports and Tourism District) closer to George R. Brown Convention Center
- increase shopping and employment opportunities along MLK and Scott Street - no big box
- high density area is needed along I 45 between Sampson and Cullen Streets - spaces are for sale across from Palm Center
- some initiatives for affordable housing
- emphasis on residential development with some commercial
- encourage more students to move here

Southeast

Evolution from workshop suggestions to report

Pedestrian Realm



Existing pedestrian realm as presented at the workshop

Potential pedestrian realm drawn during the two-day workshop

Proposed pedestrian realm

Initiatives



Current Initiatives as presented at the workshop

Sample workshop comments

Summary of workshop Initiatives results

Summary of Initiatives

Land Development



Existing Land Use as presented at the workshop

Land Development Concept Plan produced during the workshop

Proposed Land Development Concept Plan



Southeast Corridor Workshop



Developing a Demonstration Plan during the Workshop



Southeast Display Panels

Areas to be Protected

- 12 community assets in cluster near Emancipation Park and Project Row House
- Frenchy's Fried Chicken landmark at Scott Street by TSU and University of Houston
- local businesses that give character to the area, especially along Scott Street, the Universities and Beal Village Nursing Home

Participants were also asked to write a headline for the front page of the Houston Chronicle in 2012. The headline was to reflect the character of the Southeast Corridor once the Transit Street has been built. The facing page summarizes some of the headlines collected during this exercise. These statements clearly represent a positive future for the Southeast Corridor and the benefits of transit for the area.

Based on the input provided during the first workshop day, the preliminary Pedestrian Realm, Land Development Concept Plans, and three Demonstration Plans were developed and presented for discussion the next day.

The drawings on the previous page illustrate the input received at the workshop and the evolution to the report's Pedestrian Realm, Current Initiatives and Land Development Concept Plans (see Chapter C2 for proposed Plans).



Beacon Street, Boston, MA



Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL



Byward Market, Ottawa, Canada

Southeast now “Rail”- on the right track
METRO light shines through MacGregor park

**New commercial and business development
created 3,000 new jobs**
Metro dismantles guideway going back to buses

Frenchy’s survives and thrives on the rail
Gateway to the University

Mass rail causes spark in affordable housing

Southeast Corridor - Up and Running

These Headlines were taken during the Southeast Corridor Workshop