

LOWER WESTHEIMER ENHANCED PRE-ENGINEERING STUDY

PROJECT OBJECTIVE, PRINCIPLES, STRATEGIES

Project Objective

The project objective for the Lower Westheimer Corridor Study is:

Lower Westheimer serves as an urban “main street” that creates an enhanced pedestrian experience. Lower Westheimer should support transit, improve access to local businesses, be aesthetically pleasing, and preserve the local culture and character while managing traffic flow effectively and safely.

Guiding Principles

The project objective for the Lower Westheimer Study is supported by the following guiding principles:

1. Strongly support use of multiple modes of transportation along the corridor, with pedestrian and transit uses as top priorities.
2. Support local businesses and surrounding neighborhoods by providing convenient and safe access, including parking, for people to destinations using multiple modes of transportation.
3. Improve safety along the corridor for all users, with the goal of eliminating serious crashes along the corridor for all users (Vision Zero).
4. Balance adequate capacity for safe vehicular movement with safe access for people who walk, bike, and ride transit throughout the corridor.
5. Maintain and enhance cultural and historical heritage, improve aesthetics, and contribute to the community’s greater “sense of place”.

Strategies

Specific strategies to consider:

1. Provide wider pedestrian pathways and other pedestrian realm features that integrate well with adjacent existing businesses and accommodate future pedestrian-oriented redevelopment.
2. Promote efficient and effective movement of people and goods by integrating and linking various modes of transportation with particular attention to major intersections.
3. Consider safety as the primary component of all infrastructure design decisions with an end objective of reducing fatalities and crashes.
4. Utilize access management to remove conflict points and improve safety.

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5. Employ intersection designs that function as character-defining nodes.
6. Ensure transit stops are well-placed and allow for adequate vehicular flow wherever possible, that offer comfortable, accessible waiting areas for all riders, including individuals with disabilities, and that street design supports reliable, frequent, high-ridership transit service.
7. Incorporate on-street parking to support local businesses where feasible.
8. Maintain and enhance cultural and historical features along the corridor, including existing trees where possible.
9. Consider aesthetically pleasing features including street trees.
10. Utilize design elements that recognize and support the character of Lower Westheimer Road and its diverse built form.
11. Facilitate safe connectivity between neighborhoods, including for pedestrians as well as for bicycles crossing Westheimer, with a focus on intersection design.
12. Employ design features that allow balance between traffic speeds, access, and parking for adjacent land uses, but do not interfere with area aesthetics.
13. Consider burial of above-ground power lines due to limited right-of-way, subject to funding considerations.
14. Recognize the regional importance of the corridor, especially for transit use, and provide appropriate access opportunities that will help shape the path of future land use.
15. Shorten pedestrian crossing distances where possible.
16. Strategically consolidate and relocate bus stops (for example, far side stops) and incorporate signal technology (such as transit signal priority) to improve transit travel times and reliability.
17. Recognize the importance of lighting, landscaping, and other design features in improving the streetscape and enhancing safety for pedestrians and other users.

Note: Distributed at August 30 Stakeholder Advisory Committee for comment. Incorporates comments from SAC received by 9/16/16.