

# Neartown Development Report

- *Forum II May 15th, 2010*
- *Forum III October 30th, 2010*

Association  
Neartown

*Houston, Texas  
Fall 2011*



©Copyright 2011 Neartown Association  
Post Office Box 130320  
Houston, Texas 77219  
All Rights Reserved

*[www.nearatown.org](http://www.nearatown.org)*

---

## *Table of Contents*

<i>Message from the President</i> .....	4
<i>Support from Local Leaders</i> .....	6
<i>Kudos for Montrose</i> .....	7
<i>Timeline</i> .....	9
<i>Montrose at the Crossroads: A Report from ULI-Houston</i> .....	11
<i>METRO University Light Rail Line</i> .....	13
<i>Urban Corridors</i> .....	13
<i>Collaboration for Pedestrian Amenities</i> .....	15
<i>Pedestrian Streetscape on Richmond Avenue</i> .....	15
<i>H-E-B Development at Dunlavy &amp; West Alabama</i> .....	17
<i>Historic Preservation</i> .....	20
<i>Neighborhood Protection</i> .....	21
<i>Montrose Management District</i> .....	22
<i>Infrastructure</i> .....	24
<i>Parks</i> .....	24
<i>Streets and Drainage</i> .....	24
<i>Super Neighborhood Action Plan</i> .....	25
<i>Development Updates</i> .....	26
<i>Carnegie Vanguard High School</i> .....	26
<i>University of St. Thomas</i> .....	27
<i>Buffalo Bayou Park</i> .....	28
<i>Forum Participants</i> .....	31
<i>Nearatown Civic Associations</i> .....	31
<i>City of Houston Elected Officials &amp; Staff</i> .....	32
<i>City of Houston Departments</i> .....	32
<i>METRO</i> .....	32
<i>Participating Organizations</i> .....	33
<i>Other Participants</i> .....	34
<i>Acknowledgements</i> .....	35
<i>Nearatown Officers</i> .....	35



We captured interests, issues, and ideas raised by Forum participants on a map, which has provided a baseline for ongoing discussions (see page 8).

At the Neartown Development Forum III, held on October 30, 2010, we focused attention on two of the above projects. H-E-B shared details of plans for a new grocery store at Dunlavy and W. Alabama, received feedback from participants on specific aspects of their plans, and collected votes on three proposed store designs. We also heard an update from METRO on the overall METRO Rail program and got an overview of design challenges on the Neartown segment of the University Line. The METRO team gathered input from participants on those challenges, and we established a three-way dialog between the City, the neighborhood, and METRO.

We look forward to continuing an open and positive dialog with residents, businesses, and our institutional neighbors who contribute to the rich culture of our unique Montrose neighborhood.

Thank You,

David W. Robinson, NTA President

## Support from Local Leaders

*“The Neartown Development Forum continues to be a venue which provides pivotal discourse and organization for the shared vision of Neartown. It is a collaborative effort; pulling together invested citizens, local businesses, non-profits, city government, and a variety of stakeholders devoted to the flourishing of the Montrose Community.*

*As Neartown sits within District D, I am especially proud to represent a community that is truly a microcosm of the City of Houston. It embodies success stories, mixed use development, and a vast diversity of places and people that is unparalleled anywhere. Yet, it also possesses a density, growth, and popularity that has surpassed its original infrastructure and planning. The forum recognizes this.*

*The excellence and participation of the Neartown Forum is not only an indication that a long term vision for Montrose exist, but that this vision is well constructed, conceptualized, and speaks to the character one of the country’s best neighborhoods.” - Wanda Adams, Houston City Council Member, District D*

*“St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church is delighted to support civic engagement in our Neartown Neighborhood by offering our space for learning, debate, and the exchange of ideas. In this time of rapid change in our community, we particularly welcome the chance to host meetings to design our future together. It was informative for our St. Stephen’s school and church community to learn about plans for transportation, development, and planning and to be able to contribute to the discussion. We especially appreciate the work of the Neartown Super Neighborhood leaders for including the religious community in their planning efforts.” – Reverend Lisa Hunt, St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church*

*“The Neartown Development Forum is a key community initiative that not only brings stakeholders together, but encourages by the spirit of the participants a shared effort for the greater good of the community. Centered at the core – is community engagement, planning and collaboration with real results. I applaud the leadership for your visionary insight and dedication.” - Ellen Cohen, Former State Representative, District 134*



*Council Member Sue Lovell presents Officer Wayne Pate with the APA Great Places award.*

---

# *Kudos for Montrose*



## GREAT PLACES IN AMERICA: NEIGHBORHOODS

*The American Planning Association celebrates excellence in planning*

The American Planning Association hereby designates

**MONTROSE | HOUSTON**

as one of the Great Places In America

2009

Handwritten signature of Paul Farmer in black ink.

W. Paul Farmer, FAICP  
Executive Director and CEO

Handwritten signature of Bruce A. Knight in black ink.

Bruce A. Knight, FAICP  
APA President

*The American Planning Association named Montrose one of the 10 Great Neighborhoods in America in 2009.*



# Timeline

## 2007

*Richmond alignment for METRORail University Line approved* . . . . . October

## 2008

*Richmond Avenue Workshop* . . . . . January

*CIP Application* . . . . . February

*SNAP Application* . . . . . March

*District D Town Hall Meeting, CM Wanda Adams* . . . . . May

*Hurricane Ike* . . . . . September

*Nearatown Development Forum I* . . . . . October

## 2009

*SNAP Application* . . . . . February

*CIP Application* . . . . . March

*ULI-Houston /Nearatown Association/ Blueprint Houston TAP* . . . . . April

*Urban Corridors Ordinance approved* . . . . . August

*American Planning Association Great Places Award* . . . . . October

## 2010

*SNAP Application* . . . . . February

*CIP Application* . . . . . March

*Nearatown Development Forum II* . . . . . May

*Historic Preservation Ordinance amended* . . . . . October

*Nearatown Development Forum III* . . . . . October

*Proposition 1 Charter Amendment approved* . . . . . November

## 2011

*NTA president elected Super Neighborhood Alliance president* . . . . . January

*SNAP Application* . . . . . February

*Montrose Management District established (East + West)* . . . . . February

*Rebuild Houston Drainage Utility Ordinance approved* . . . . . April

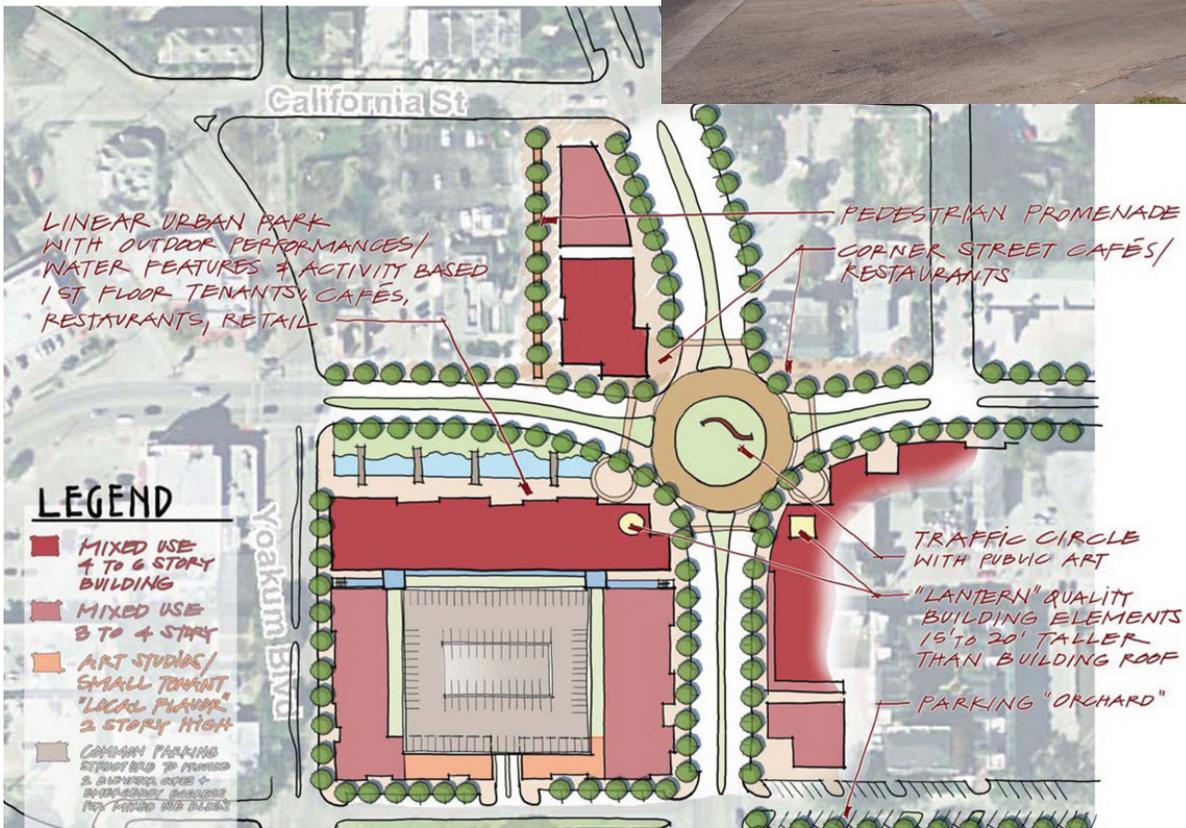
*City Council Redistricting Plan approved, Nearatown in District C* . . . . . May

*Cherryhurst Center threatened/ closing averted* . . . . . June

*Richmond Ave. collaboration: CoH, METRO, Community* . . . . . Spring – Fall

*Nearatown Transportation Forum* . . . . . September

The intersection of Montrose and Westheimer.



ULI TAP concepts for the Montrose Crossroads include a traffic circle, street trees, water features, mixed use development with ground floor retail/cafes, pedestrian promenades, and a shared parking facility. Aerial view (above); alternative designs in perspectives looking east along Westheimer (left and below).



Renderings courtesy INsite Architecture and Asakura Robinson

## Montrose at the Crossroads: A Report from ULI-Houston



The prominence of the intersection of Montrose and Westheimer and the strong desire for improvements that would reflect its importance in the Montrose landscape were topics of much discussion at the first Neartown Development Forum in October 2008. In 2009, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) - Houston District Council, with the sponsorship of Blueprint Houston and the Neartown Association, assembled a Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) to “identify appropriate types of real estate development and redevelopment” for the area immediately surrounding this intersection. In its *Montrose at the Crossroads* report, the ULI-Houston TAP documents opportunities to improve walkability, capitalize on the 24/7 nature of the area, address the severe shortage of parking, and increase the number of parks, plazas and promenades.

ULI Panel Chair Jim Kollaer talks to Neartown Secretary Julie Young.

The ULI TAP offers suggestions for creating identity and a heightened sense of place, various desirable types of development, and creating and improving on existing pedestrian infrastructure. The TAP notes the need for attention to sustainability for the existing urban forest and maintaining the existing character of the neighborhood. The ULI TAP report also includes recommendations about resources and approaches for planning, funding and implementing improvements.

([http://www.uli-houston.org/PDF/090409\\_ULIBook.pdf](http://www.uli-houston.org/PDF/090409_ULIBook.pdf))



Keiji Asakura, Blueprint Houston Executive Committee, describes the ULI TAP area.



METRO's David Couch and Kim Williams discuss plans for the University Line with Ed Gonzales.

---

*Please use minimum lane width of 10 ft. to allow for wider sidewalk width. Please use shared left hand turn lanes with automobile traffic to allow for wider sidewalks. Please remember this train is being built through my neighborhood. I want to walk in my neighborhood. Please don't make cars your priority.*

*I purchased property near Menil due to proposed station location. Looking forward to great improvements / enhancements.*

*Develop and advertise effective programs to help all the small businesses that will be affected.*



METRO University Line along Richmond Ave. through Neartown.

---

*Please make the traffic lanes 10' wide, brick all cross walks, max width sidewalks and maximum trees. Slow down thru traffic. These will allow us who live near a higher quality of life.*

*Make METRO pedestrian friendly. Need more secure, well lit paths to the rail lines. Improve sidewalks eliminating uneven, broken pavement paths to allow baby carriage usage.*

*- Comments from Forum III participants*



METRO CEO George Greanias hears from Forum participants.

---



*“The Neartown Development Forum is an ideal venue for METRO to present the community with updates on the METRO Solutions plans for light-rail development. By bringing together stakeholders, from the City and civic clubs to advocacy and preservation groups, we can meet with the united goal of shaping the future of a diverse and historical neighborhood.*

*As with any major infrastructure improvement, there are major challenges to be met, but by working together, we can reach a consensus on a project that will continue to shape the area for generations to come. The safety of the neighborhood and the system is integral to METRO’s overarching goal of light-rail development, and our partnership with the community emphasizes our commitment to this goal. Accessible and safe pedestrian crossings and sidewalks are key to the success of the system, just like safe vehicular movement. We’re at the start of an exciting project, which will positively impact our city and neighborhoods with new economic strength and mobility - METRO is looking forward to continue moving forward with you.”*

*- Senior Vice President,  
Capital Programs*

## *METRO University Light Rail Line*

The University Light Rail line is planned to run down Richmond Ave through the southern edge of Neartown, with the western terminus at the Hillcroft Transit Center and the eastern end at the Eastwood Transit Center. When the line is complete, including connections to the Main Street and Uptown Lines, our Super Neighborhood will add modern transit linkages to major activity centers in the city. The system will link Neartown residents, businesses, and institutions, including the Menil Collection and the University of St. Thomas, with the Central Business District in Downtown Houston, Greenway Plaza, Texas Southern University, University of Houston, the Galleria area, and the Texas Medical Center, as well as many other important destinations.

In 2010 METRO officials made numerous appearances at Neartown Association meetings and participated in the 2010 Neartown Development Forums II and III. The agency provided progress updates and heard from Neartown residents about their concerns. With the issuance in July 2010 of a Record of Decision by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), METRO came to the October Forum prepared to begin more detailed discussion on key design considerations for the line along Richmond Avenue. Many of the comments and questions from Forum participants centered around: accommodations for bicycles on the trains and at stations; pedestrian amenities like crosswalks, wide and level sidewalks, trees, good lighting; planning for narrower traffic lanes to allow for wider sidewalks; reduction of truck traffic and downsizing trucks and busses on Richmond; programs and information for small businesses along the line; timing of construction. We look forward to a continuing exchange of ideas between METRO, the City of Houston, and the community on these important topics.

## *Urban Corridors*

The “Urban Corridors” ordinance (Ord. no. 2009-0762 Chapter 42 Article IV) was approved by Houston Planning Commission on June 11 and adopted by Houston City Council on August 19, 2009. The adoption of the ordinance



*Ryan Albright and Brian Crimmins of CoH Planning & Development discuss Urban Corridors with participant.*

culminated a multiyear process, begun in June 2006, to “change how the City regulates development and designs its streets and other infrastructure in order to create a high quality urban environment in areas along METRO’s light rail corridors.”

The ordinance requires sidewalks with clear pedestrian space, six feet wide and seven and a half feet tall, along transit corridor and Type A streets. A Type A street is defined as a street that intersects a transit corridor street and abuts a blockface that is within 1,320 feet walking distance of the end of a transit station platform. The ordinance also establishes performance standards for property owners who wish to “opt-in” to create 15 foot pedestrian realms, including provisions regarding softscape, placement of driveways and parking,

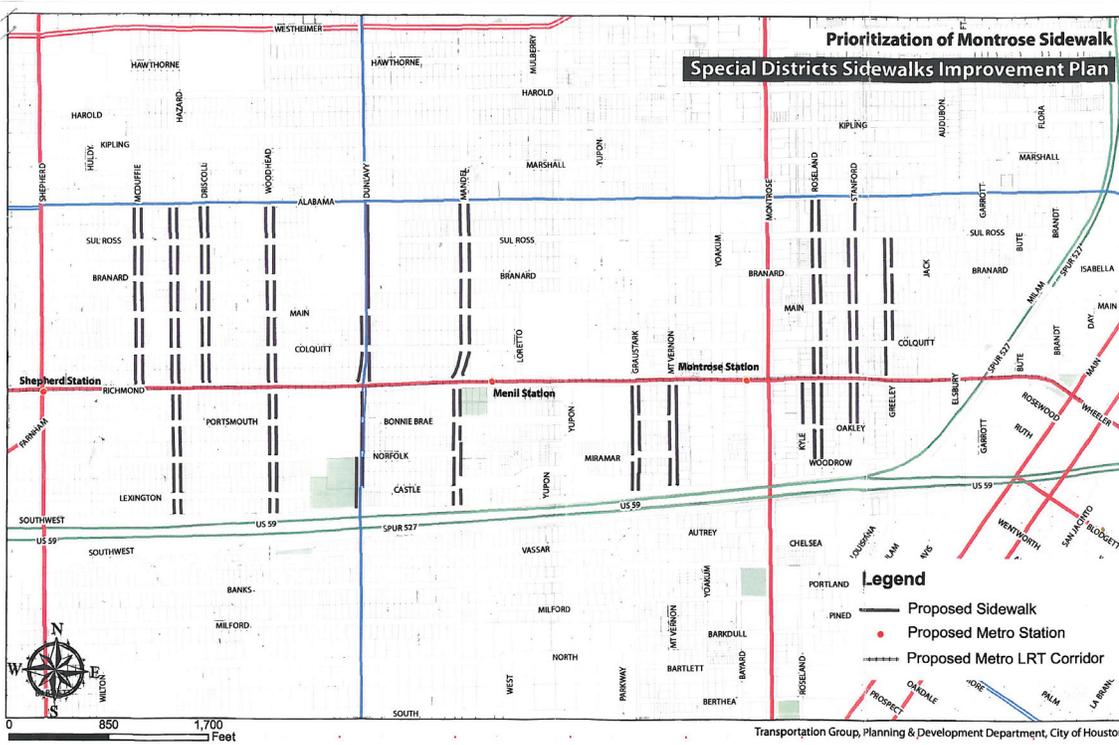
vegetative buffers, transparency of building façade and fences, access to building entrances, and proximity of the façade to the pedestrian realm – all to favor pedestrians.



David W. Robinson, Neartown; Kevin Cronin, METRO; Mark Loethen, CoH Public Works; and Joe Webb, RichmondRail.org talk about METRO/City/Community collaboration on the University Line.

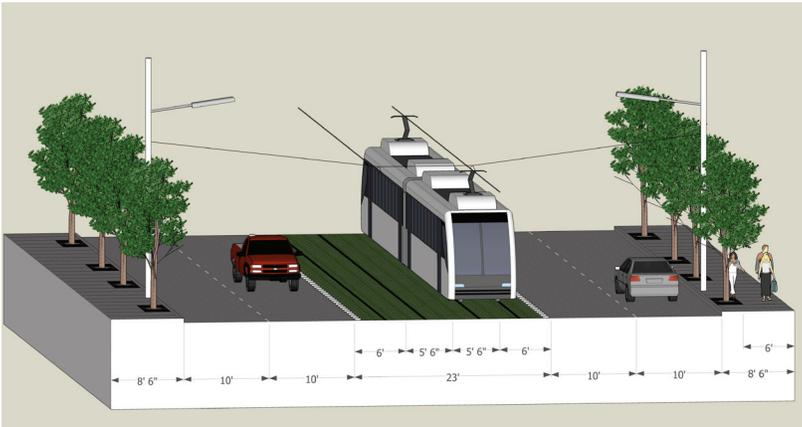


Jeff Taebel with the Houston-Galveston Area Council.



H-GAC & CoH plan for sidewalk improvements on “Type A” streets intersecting Richmond Ave. and the planned METRO University Line.

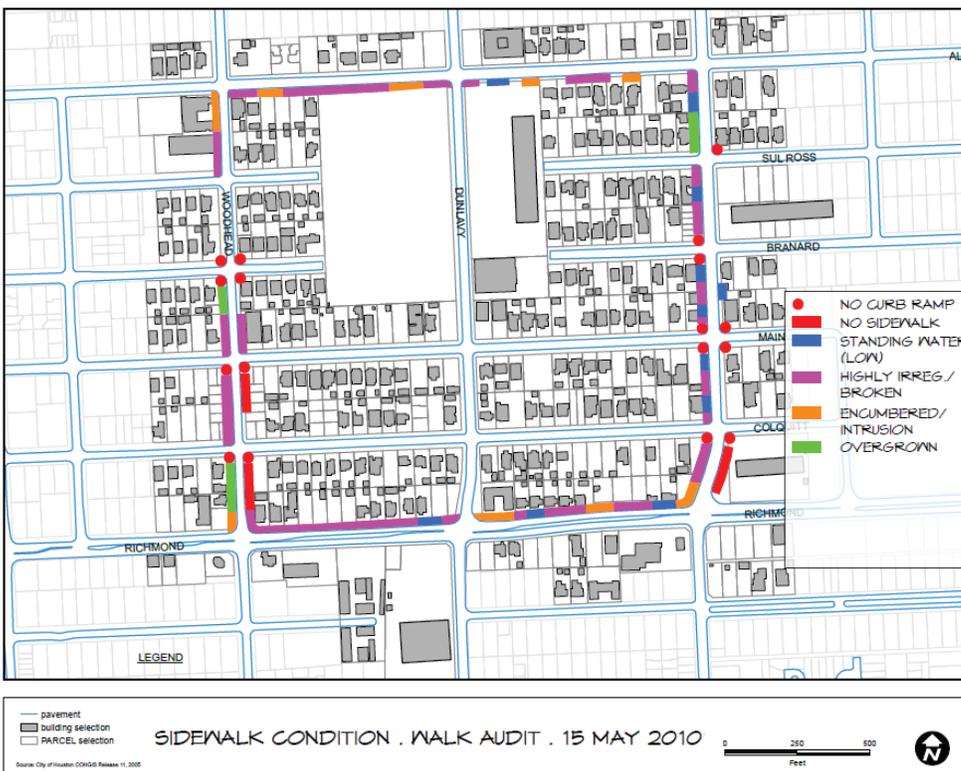
## Collaboration for Pedestrian Amenities



*RichmondRail.org proposed right-of-way allocation to maximize pedestrian zone.*

The Houston-Galveston Area Council is partnering with the City of Houston Department of Public Works and Engineering to improve pedestrian access in the Montrose area. Based on a \$1.6 million grant from Federal Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality funds and 20% matching funds from the City of Houston, initial plans have been drawn for sidewalk and pedestrian amenities along Urban Corridor Type A streets. Type A streets that intersect and provide access from Montrose neighborhoods to the future University Line transit corridor include: McDuffie, Hazard, Driscoll, Woodhead, Dunlavy, Mandell, Graustark, and Mt. Vernon.

## Pedestrian Streetscape on Richmond Avenue



In 2009, RichmondRail.org put together a resolution defining streetscape design elements that could “enhance the community, reduce traffic by allowing people to walk and use transit, and make Neartown more livable.” It also proposes allocation of the constrained public right-of-way along Richmond Avenue to maximize the pedestrian realm. The Neartown Association, member civic associations along the rail corridor, and major Neartown institutions have endorsed the resolution, and it serves as a basis for discussion with the City and METRO.

For details on the resolution, see <http://www.richmondrail.org/blogs/?p=63>

*A walk audit is a walking review of a street to assess the pedestrian environment. The walk audit conducted by RichmondRail.org at the Development Forum II, of a loop route between the Forum site and the site of the future Menil Station on the University Line, demonstrates the need for sidewalk improvements.*



*H-E-B design proposal:  
The Wave.*

---



*H-E-B design proposal:  
The Sawtooth.*

---



*H-E-B design proposal:  
The Pavilion  
(the winning design).*

---



*Architect Robert Morris and Christopher Patterson  
of Montrose Land Defense Coalition discuss their  
alternative proposals.*

---



*H-E-B's Cyndy Garza talks to Carol Rensink  
about plans for the new store.*

---

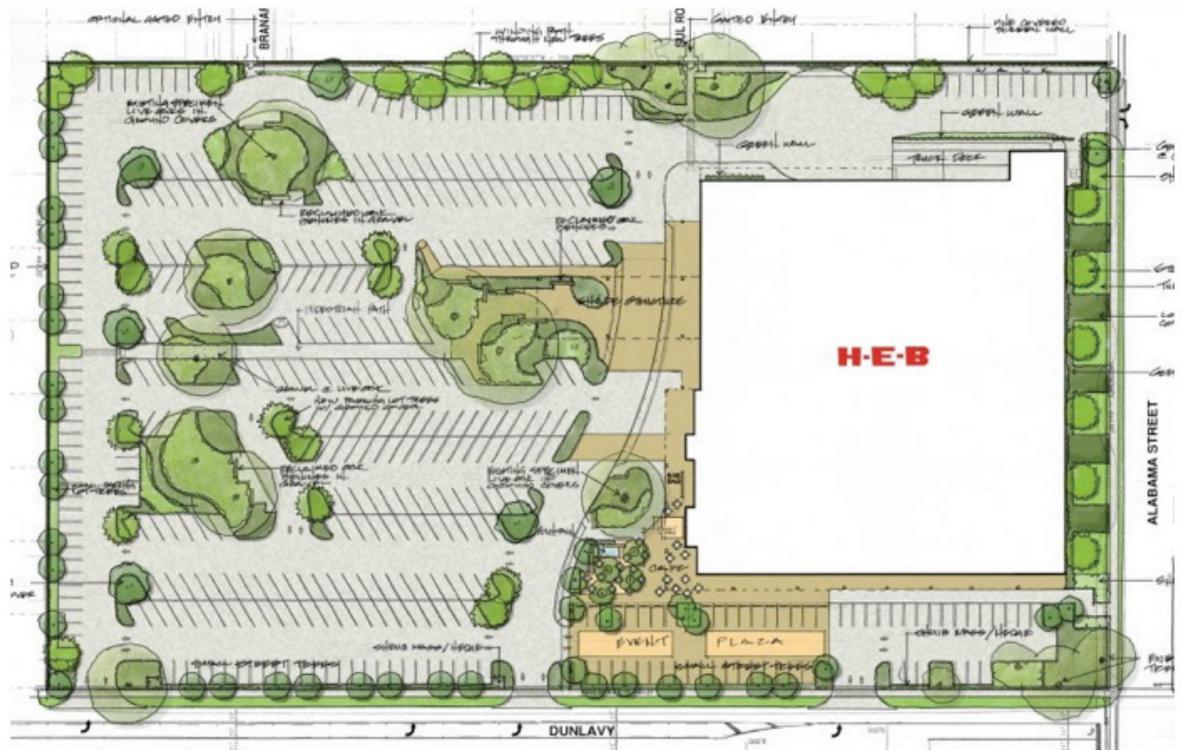
## H-E-B Development at Dunlavy & West Alabama



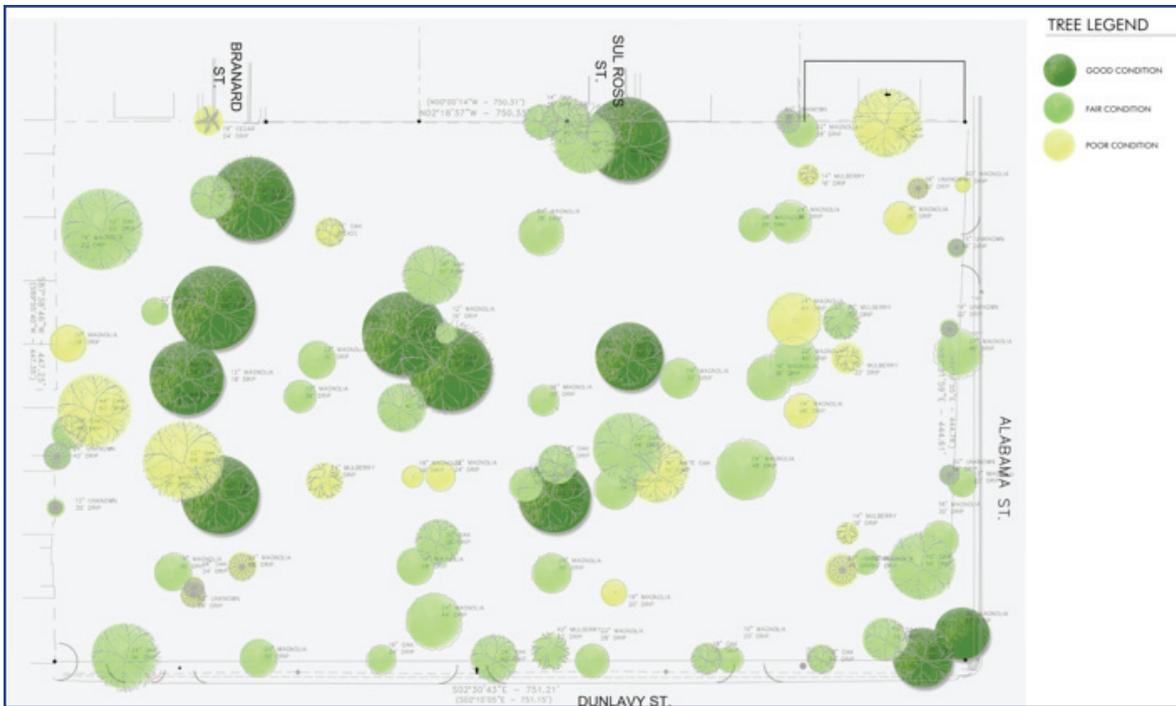
*H-E-B Houston President Scott McClelland hears from Forum participants.*

In early 2010, H-E-B Houston announced that it was considering development of a new grocery store at Dunlavy and W. Alabama, the former site of the Wilshire Village apartments. Representatives of the neighboring civic associations met with H-E-B to present the neighborhood concerns and interests. A newly formed group, the Montrose Land Defense Coalition, held rallies and put together alternative plans for consideration.

H-E-B accepted Neartown Association's invitation to participate in Development Forum II in May 2010, to share information about their plans and get the reactions and ideas of Neartown residents. At Development Forum III in October 2010, H-E-B presented three designs for their planned store and asked participants to vote on their favored design.



H-E-B Site Plan



A major concern of residents was what would happen to the beautiful old trees on the development site. H-E-B worked with Trees for Houston and urban forester, Steven Anderson, to identify the healthiest mature trees and has taken steps to preserve those. In addition, the company has committed to replace the trees that have been removed (based on the measured caliper inches) at other locations in Montrose. Trees for Houston is maintaining the “bank” of available trees for replanting as needed.



*Richard Golden and Cyndy Garza of H-E-B review the site tree survey with Forum participants.*



*Aerial view of Pavilion design from corner of Dunlavy and West Alabama.*



Maria-Elisa Heg of Montrose Land Defense Coalition shows alternative proposals for store site.



H-E-B VP of Design & Construction Bill Triplett, AIA shows models of proposed designs to Forum participants.



Patrick Peters and Claude Wynn.

*“As a former president of Lancaster Place, one of my current civic ‘duties’ is to serve as a neighborhood liaison for Lancaster, Winlow and Mandell Places in current and future discussions with H-E-B regarding H-E-B’s intent to construct a grocery store ‘complex’ at the corner of Dunlavy and W. Alabama on the 7.5+ acres which formerly housed Wilshire Village. Indeed, it is through discussions with H-E-B top officials that our neighborhoods have been able to work with H-E-B to*



Kipp Miller

- (1) reorient the store footprint on the property to the quadrant located near the corner of Dunlavy and W. Alabama (which will help preserve many of the finer tree specimens located in other parts of the property, as well as keep H-E-B buildings at the desired distance from residences that populate the south and west borders of the huge property)*
- (2) arrange for H-E-B, with the official approval of the Planning Commission, to build street-blocking walls at the east ends of the dead end 1700 blocks of Branard and Sul Ross to mitigate traffic, safety and privacy concerns, as well as prevent Woodhead and surrounding streets from becoming ‘back door’ entrances to the store property*
- (3) present a building design that is in keeping with Montrose’s unique cultural nature*
- (4) keep access to the store pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly*
- (5) address area traffic, lighting and noise concerns*
- (6) further improve the property’s remaining green space for the benefit of the neighborhood*

*The opportunity for the community to meet with the H-E-B representatives (H-E-B real estate VP Richard Golden and PR director Cyndy Garza were on hand to present, update and discuss one-on-one with interested parties H-E-B’s plans for the land) was welcomed by all. Also, the Forum’s inclusion of the Montrose Land Defense Coalition—Houston activists seeking a more ‘green’ and diverse use for the property—showed not only a willingness to include all parties in this public discussion, but emphasized the City’s directive to H-E-B that community, as well as Greater Houston interests, need to be served responsibly—no matter what the scope or location of any particular commercial project.”*

*Kipp Miller  
Past President, Lancaster Place*

## *Historic Preservation*

The City of Houston's Historic Preservation Office participated in Development Forum II. Representatives answered questions about the Historic Preservation Ordinance and discussed the benefits of historic preservation, the process of designating historic buildings as a City landmark or designating a neighborhood as a City historic district. They also provided information on the economic incentives for historic buildings offered by the City. Many residents expressed how much they enjoy living in one of Neartown's six City Historic Districts, their pride in their historic homes, and their interest in preserving the historic character of their neighborhood.

In the second half of 2010, the City held a series of public meetings to receive comments on proposed amendments to the Historic Preservation Ordinance. Subsequently, the amended ordinance was approved by the Houston Archeological and Historical Commission and the Planning Commission and adopted by City Council on October 13, 2010. Information about the process and provisions of the Historic Preservation Ordinance can be found online at [www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/hist\\_pres.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/hist_pres.html).



*Bridget Jensen and Laura Wilson talk with Nathan Kraus of CoH Planning.*

---

## *Neighborhood Protection*

**T**he City of Houston provides neighborhoods with several other tools to help protect their character:

### *Deed Restrictions*

Deed restrictions are written agreements that restrict, or limit, the use or activities that may take place on property in a subdivision. These restrictions appear in the real property records of the county in which the property is located. A primary purpose of most deed restrictions is preserve the residential character of a subdivision by keeping out commercial and industrial facilities. Most deed restrictions have an average life span of 25 to 30 years. Residents may obtain a copy of deed restrictions for their subdivision from the County Clerk of the county in which they reside. Deed restrictions are powerful tools to help preserve the character of a subdivision or neighborhood. However, creating and/or revising them is an often lengthy labor intensive process. In seeking to create or revise deed restrictions in a neighborhood much of your time will be spent garnering neighbor support.

### *Minimum Building Lines and Lot Sizes*

Building set backs and lot sizes are often defining features of a neighborhood, giving blocks a certain look and feel. Neighborhoods inside the 610 Loop that want to preserve this aspect of their character may want to explore using the Minimum Lot Size or Minimum Building Line application. These designations are in place 20 years from the date City Council adopts an ordinance establishing a minimum lot size or building line.

A special minimum lot size is the minimum lot size standard currently met by at least 70% of the application area. Applications from City designated Historic Districts use the slightly lower threshold of 60%. By establishing this standard, lots cannot be subdivided below the “special minimum” lot size in the designated area. For instance, if 5,000 square feet was established as the special minimum lot size, a lot could not be divided into lots smaller than that size.

Similar to the lot size, a minimum building line, or setback, is the minimum building line currently met by at least 70% of the structures in the application area. Applications from City designated Historic Districts use the slightly lower threshold of 60%. Once established, structures must be constructed behind the minimum building line.

For details on these tools, see Neighborhood Planning on the CoH Planning and development website: <http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/>.

# Montrose Management District

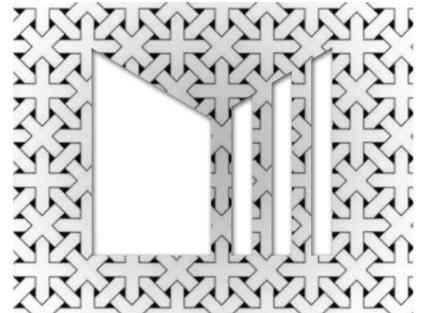
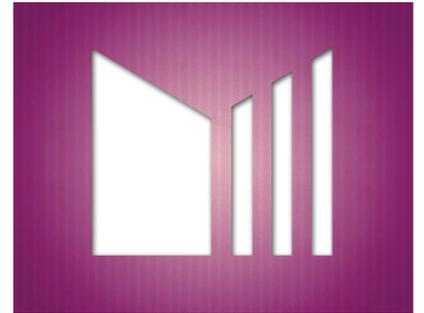
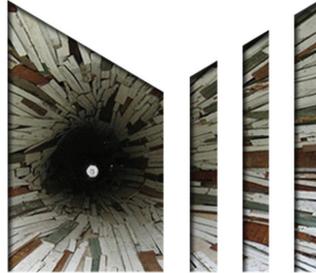
In February 2011, Harris County Improvement Districts #6 and #11 combined to form the Montrose Management District. The District Service and Assessment Plan focuses on four key areas:

- Business development
- Public safety
- Transportation planning
- Visual improvements and cultural promotion

The District has a comprehensive business development plan, including public relations and marketing. The Board of Directors also recently approved a new Montrose Management District logo. The logo is the result of extensive research including a visual preference survey that was circulated throughout the area. Clean and green initiatives in the works include a community wide cleanup project and recycling events. Visit <http://www.MontroseDistrict.org> for more information on these programs or contact Director of Marketing and Business Development, Gretchen Larson at 713.595.1215.

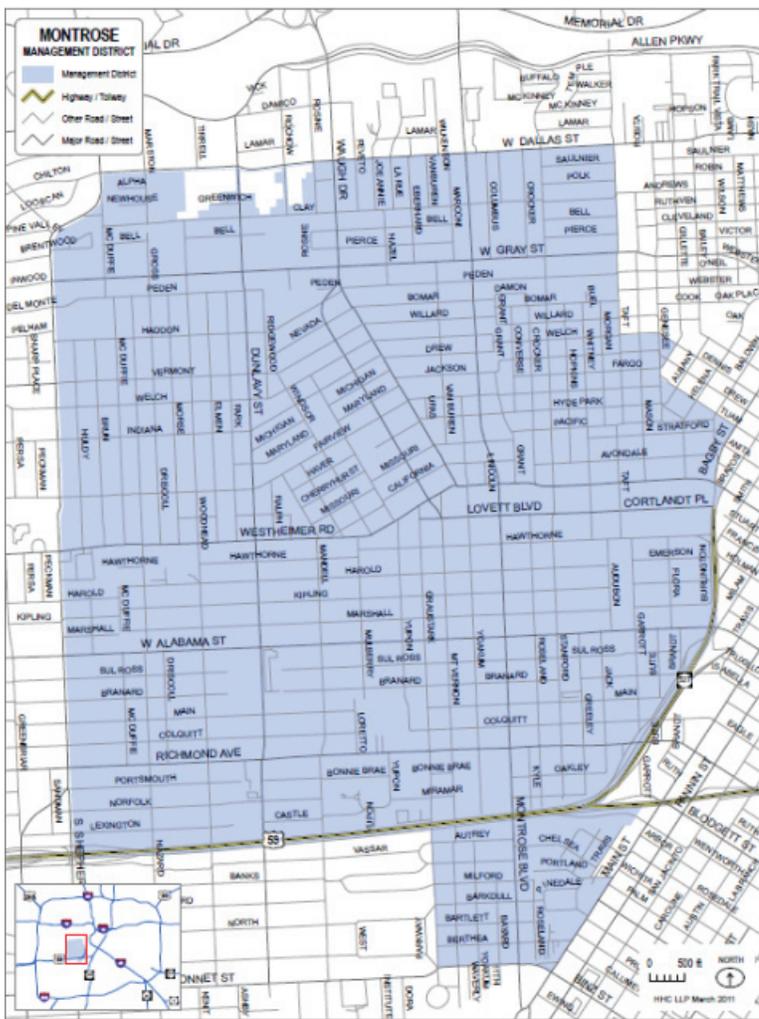
The District's Public Safety Program includes seven officers working rotating shifts. In addition, three full-time and six part-time officers patrol the area on bikes; the three full-time officers patrol the parks. The Mobile Security Camera Program assists officers with crime prevention and enforcement. As part of its public safety focus, the District also enhances public street lighting where needed, partners with and supports HPD's Positive Interaction Program (PIP), and advocates with other agencies for additional security measures. The focused law enforcement efforts make the area a safer place and enhance the quality of life for all those who invest, live, work and visit the district.

The District's Graffiti Abatement Program aids businesses in complying with the City of Houston ordinance requiring property owners to remove visual



*Montrose Management District logo example uses.*

Josh Hawes, Montrose Management District staff, discusses mobility study with Forum attendees.



Montrose Management District boundaries

blight such as graffiti within ten business days of its occurrence. The program is available at no additional cost to business or commercial property owners paying the district assessment. To take advantage of the program businesses sign a waiver form permitting the District to abate graffiti on their property. To learn more about any of the public safety and targeted law enforcement efforts in the District contact Director of Service, Josh Hawes at 713.724.3862.

The District commissioned a mobility and transportation inventory by Walter P. Moore. Work on the inventory has been completed for the district's east side and the study is available for download at <http://www.MontroseDistrict.org>. Work is now underway on the west side.

The District partners on projects with local government and other other agencies as well, including the City of Houston, Harris County, and METRO. Joint projects include maintenance of the district esplanades and beautification projects. These partnerships allow the district to allocate assessment funds for projects in a cost effective and efficient manner. The Board of Directors recently announced a collaborative effort with the Texas Department of Transportation to light the bridge at Montrose Blvd. over Highway 59.



**MONTROSE**  
DISTRICT

# Infrastructure

## Parks

**Ervan Chew Park:** The City completed a renovation of Ervan Chew Park, 4502 Dunlavy, in the fall of 2010. Improvements include expansion of the plaza, replacement of the swimming pool with a water sprayground, relocation of basketball court closer to the street for better visibility, new soccer goals, new trails, and a water retention area.

**Mandell Park:** The Friends of Mandell Park launched a \$1 million fundraising campaign to implement the Mandell Park Master Plan developed by Asakura Robinson with assistance of students of the University of Houston Gerald Hines School of Architecture. The 1.22 acre park at Richmond Avenue and Mandell St. currently encompasses Meredith Gardens, a fully organic community garden affiliated with Urban Harvest and the CoH Garden Initiative, and a pocket prairie planted with native plants rescued from the Saum's Road Prairie in 2008. [www.friendsofmandellpark.org/](http://www.friendsofmandellpark.org/)

**Wilson Wonderground:** An effort is also underway to raise funds to create Wilson Wonderground, a natural play space and athletics field on the grounds of Wilson Montessori School. The park, bounded by Windsor, Fairview and Yupon, would be developed as a SPARK Park. The SPARK Park Program enables school parks to be developed as neighborhood parks, with gates open to the community after school activities end and during weekends, holidays and summer months. [www.wilsonspark.org](http://www.wilsonspark.org)

## Streets and Drainage

The ReBuild Houston Initiative is the City of Houston's plan to rebuild the city's drainage and street infrastructure in order to improve the quality of life and mobility for residents of the city. In November 2010, Houston voters approved Proposition 1 to amend the city charter and establish a dedicated, pay-as-you-go fund to provide for long-term needed improvements and ongoing maintenance of drainage and street infrastructure. In April 2011, Houston City Council approved the Drainage Utility Ordinance, laying out the specifics of how drainage utility fees will be assessed and applied.

Plans for projects under the Rebuild Houston Initiative will be handled through the City's rolling five-year capital improvement plan (CIP) process. The City has recently published a Capital Improvement Plan Process Manual



*Forum participants.*

---



*Carl, Jill, Joey & Brooke Jarvis.*

---

for Infrastructure Programs that explains the process for identifying needs and developing and recommending projects for the CIP. For details on Rebuild Houston, visit <http://www.rebuildhouston.org>.

## Super Neighborhood Action Plan

At the beginning of each year, the Neartown Association works with member civic associations to collect requests for submission to the City for the Super Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP). As of the publication of this report, the City shows fifteen Neartown SNAP projects as “accepted” and scheduled for completion between 2011 and 2014. These include street overlays and patching, tree replanting, and tree mulching. For a report on the status of SNAP requests, see <http://mycity.houstontx.gov/snappublic/> and select “Montrose” Super Neighborhood.



*Reverend Lisa Hunt listens to a Forum participant.*

# Development Updates

## Carnegie Vanguard High School

Carnegie Vanguard High School is being designed with the notion of “School as an Interactive Place for Talent Development and Support to the Act of Learning”. Through Carnegie’s history, it has been consistently one of the two top performing schools in HISD, even though it has not had a suitable facility for its students. This vanguard school for the Gifted and Talented will finally have a facility specifically designed to support its educational mission.

The school site is centrally located in Houston’s historic Fourth Ward, contiguous with the Gregory Lincoln Magnet School site, creating an HISD two-school urban campus. The high school is developed on the southern urban edge of the site engaging the Settegast Building, an existing historic art deco building.

The architecture of this school was developed to support an interactive educational process for the gifted and talented. Students will have the opportunity to learn in multiple ways and in varied spaces ranging from flexible classrooms to outdoor classrooms on roof tops, adjacent to green roof gardens overlooking Houston’s downtown skyline. The building provides a variety of engaging environments that can be used for academic or social purposes throughout the day.

The two-story facility is organized around a central courtyard with three Academic wings. The fourth side opens to the amphitheatre court, which is contained by the Multipurpose wing and the Fine Arts Center (within the Settegast Building). The largest communal area is the Multipurpose room, which combines with the upper loft overlooking it to provide a space large enough to congregate the entire student body.

The school is designed to value the surrounding urban community and complement the scale of the neighborhood. It is sited to face the street with an urban edge, and an iconic expression of the library anchoring the prominent corner of the site. The school facility is anticipated to be silver or gold LEED certified. The school’s environmental systems and energy conserving strategies are overtly expressed in the architecture as an educational tool for the students.



Rendering of CVHS Facade



First Level (left) and Second Level (below) CVHS Plans



Aerial Rendering of CVHS Facade

---

## University of St. Thomas

**H**aving successfully raised \$67 million in the Shining Star Capital Campaign completed in December 2005, the University has developed strategic plans and priorities for the next phase of growth. Currently, two major facilities are on the drawing board to be located on two city blocks within the campus property. The Center for Science & Health Professions and the Performing Arts & Conference Center will be highlights of the next major phase of University development.

As leadership and priorities are further developed, the University plans to announce a comprehensive capital campaign in early 2013. Meanwhile, the University continues to be blessed with increasing support among all benefactors as well as expanding the number of donors engaged with the University.

Thanks to such outstanding philanthropic support, the St. Thomas Star continues to rise as everyone associated with the University embraces the vision of establishing the University as one of the nation's great Catholic universities over the coming years.

[http://www.stthom.edu/Giving\\_to\\_UST/Capital\\_Campaign.aqf](http://www.stthom.edu/Giving_to_UST/Capital_Campaign.aqf)

Planned University of St. Thomas Center for Science & Health Professions.

---



## Buffalo Bayou Park

**B**ecause of Buffalo Bayou's beautiful natural setting and downtown skyline views, the 158-acre 2.3-mile park, extending from Shepherd Drive to Sabine Street, has long been considered Houston's most iconic green space. While the park remains popular today, it is suffering from years of underfunded maintenance, which is preventing it from realizing its full potential as one of our country's great urban parks.

The Kinder Foundation, Buffalo Bayou Partnership (BBP), City of Houston and Harris County Flood Control District have formed a strong public-private partnership to carry out the ambitious \$56 million initiative. A preliminary tri-party agreement was approved by Houston City Council and Harris County Commissioners Court in February 2011. A final agreement (including maintenance requirements) will be completed by the end of the year.

Two major components comprise the project – 1) a flood reduction/eco-system restoration component led by the Harris County Flood Control District and 2) a park component being spearheaded by the Buffalo Bayou Partnership.

Funded and managed by the Harris County Flood Control District, the bayou channel will be restored by removing sediment deposits and invasive trees and vines. Using concepts based on the behavior of natural streams (fluvial geomorphology), the channel also will be returned to a more natural configuration of high and low banks, bluffs and sandbars, and even additional meanders where possible.

Buffalo Bayou Partnership's privately-funded work will include: natural landscaping, footpaths (complementing new hike and bike trails), trail lighting, special destinations, water features, pedestrian bridges, public art and amenities.

### *Major Park Components*

**Plantings:** Plantings in the park seek to restore diversity and balance to the mix of landscapes and are predicated on a strong maintenance plan. An array of vegetation will be found in the following planting zones: riparian edge, rambles, woodlands, meadows, lawns and limited perennial gardens.



*Rosemont Bridge over Buffalo Bayou.*

---



*Hike and bike trail.*

---



*Paddlecraft access to Buffalo Bayou.*

**Landscapes:** The site's special topography will be emphasized by creating numerous overlooks and vista points, as well as enhancing ravines and outfalls. The park also will see major improvements at Tirrell, Dunlavy and Crosby streets, as well as at the "dog park" and Waugh Drive Bat Colony Bridge.

**Hike and Bike Trails:** With the reconstruction of the Sandy Reed Trail into a 10-foot-wide concrete trail by TxDOT and the City of Houston starting this fall, bicycling along the bayou will become more popular. To accommodate other user groups, a series of new footpaths will be located closer to the waterway and other popular routes.

**Bridges:** To overcome the challenge of having to walk or bike long distances due to the lack of bayou crossings, pedestrian bridges will be constructed at the Police Memorial and at Jackson Hill where the existing bridge over Memorial will be extended to Allen Parkway. Smaller footbridges over several ravines and outfall tributaries also will be located in the park.

**Paddlecraft Access:** Through the Harris County Flood Control District's work, new shallow slopes inside the bayou's bends and meanders will be created. These natural spots will be ideal for canoeists and kayakers to access the bayou. Several locations will benefit from boat rental concessions.



*Moon phase blue lighting along the Sabine Promenade.*

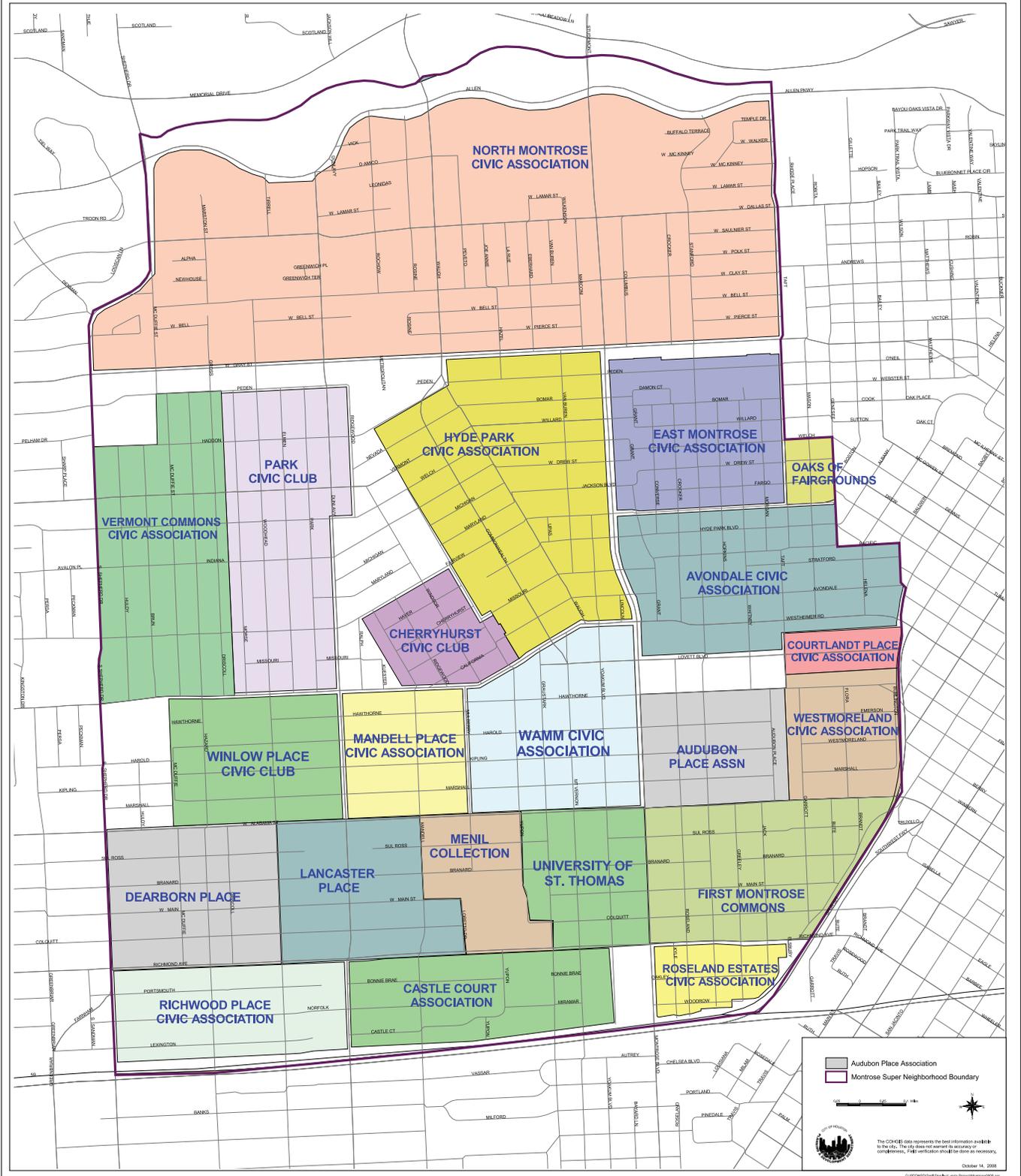
**Amenities:** A full range of shelters and a picnic pavilion are intended to provide shade, seating and other basic amenities in the park. Food and drink concessions and monitored restrooms also are proposed at major park locations.

**Lighting:** The lunar cycle lighting concept begun as part of the Sabine Promenade project will be extended. Besides trail lighting along the major Sandy Reed Memorial Trail, "outdoor rooms" and special destinations such as the Wortham Fountain and Eleanor Tinsley Park will be enhanced through the blue lighting scheme. Footpaths and other areas closer to the bayou will remain dark at night.

**On-site Parking:** As the residential and work force populations surrounding the park continue to grow, an increased number of park visitors will access the park by foot and by bicycle. In order to not impact valuable greenspace, there are limited locations for increased and enhanced vehicular parking.

For additional information about the Master Plan, please see BBP's website at <http://www.buffalobayou.org>. BBP continues to encourage the City of Houston to implement needed traffic and pedestrian safety improvements along Allen Parkway as BBP improves the park itself.

# NEARTOWN SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD: NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS



Neartown Civic Associations and Member Institutions.

---

## Forum Participants

### Neartown Civic Associations

<i>Audubon Place</i> .....	<i>Sara Kellner</i>
<i>Avondale</i> .....	<i>Jarry Booth, Sylvia Drew, Greg LeGrande, Robert &amp; Tiffney Humbert</i>
<i>Castle Court</i> .....	<i>Joellen Brayshaw, Rey De La Reza, Kirk Farris, Louis Frey, David &amp; Deborah Gottlieb-Bires, Michael Higgins, Dace Reinholds</i>
<i>Cherryhurst</i> .....	<i>Emily Corey, Jeffrey Kuchar, Carol &amp; Dave Rensink, Mark Johnson, Davis Raley, Vann Vaughn</i>
<i>Courtlandt Place</i> .....	<i>Claude Wynn</i>
<i>Dearborn- Montlew</i> .....	<i>Margaret Mitchell, Beth Porterfield</i>
<i>East Montrose</i> .....	<i>Audrey Trotti, Julie Young</i>
<i>First Montrose Commons</i> .....	<i>Ronald Boyd, Jason Ginsburg, Mary Anne &amp; Tom McBreyer</i>
<i>Hyde Park United</i> .....	<i>Bill Blackwell, Clint Harbert, Robin Holzer, Camilo Parra, Nancy Parra, Kathleen Schipper</i>
<i>Lancaster Place</i> .....	<i>Michele Adams, Kris Banks, Clara Boren, Maria Chamness, Doug Childers, Patti Creede, Renata Jansons, Carl Jarvis, Barbara Keener, Mike Kirby, Alisa Lipski, Kipp Miller, Orlando Ortega, Faith Strunk, Paul Terry, Ewing Walker, Jim Wheeler</i>
<i>Mandell Place</i> .....	<i>Bill Bartlett, Anne Hawkins, Mike Mandola, Greg Purser, Edward Rogers, Julius Salamone, David Wakefield, Carol Wolk</i>
<i>North Montrose Civic Association</i> .....	<i>Bridget Jensen, Lloyd Matzner, Allen Ueckert</i>
<i>Park Civic Association</i> .....	<i>Chris &amp; Marcie Hysinger, David W. Robinson, Willard Shuman, Barbara Tennant, Elena Wortham</i>
<i>Richwood Place</i> .....	<i>Sue Bailey, Daniel &amp; Jennifer Baker, John Geiss, Beth Nowling</i>
<i>Roseland Estates</i> .....	<i>Travis Peiffer</i>
<i>Vermont Commons</i> .....	<i>Ed Gonzales, Joan Mularski, Jesse Outlaw, Susan Wilson</i>
<i>WAMM</i> .....	<i>Marcus Duffel, Bob Smouse, David &amp; Lorie Soderberg, Joe Webb</i>
<i>Westmoreland</i> .....	<i>Adra B. Hooks</i>
<i>Winlow Place</i> .....	<i>Winifred Bellido, Gail Bryan, Tom Byrne, Tripp Carter, Jackie Corrigan, Vernon Durke, Naomi Engel, Laura Leavitt, Debbie &amp; Guy Leftar, Claire Loe, Carrie &amp; Jim Markello, Michael Miller, Randy Mitchmore, Carol Adatto Nelson, Deborah &amp; Brian Shearer, Kay Warhol</i>

## City of Houston Elected Officials & Staff

*Wanda Adams* ..... *Council Member, District D*  
*Stephen Costello* ..... *Council Member, At-Large Position 1*  
*Sue Lovell* ..... *Council Member, At-Large Position 2*  
*Conya Barreras & Ruben Vela* ..... *Mayor's Office*  
*Jeron Ravin* ..... *Office of Council Member Wanda Adams*  
*Chris Attar* ..... *Office of Council Member Stephen Costello*  
*Jack Valinski* ..... *Office of Council Member Jolanda Jones*

## City of Houston Departments

*Planning & Development* ..... *Ryan Albright, Brian Crimmins,  
Nathan Kraus, Amar Mobite, Courtney Spillane*  
*Public Works & Engineering* ..... *Mark Loethen*  
*HPD Neartown Storefront* ..... *Officer Wayne Pate*

## METRO

*Chief Executive Officer* ..... *George Grenias*  
*Senior VP Capital Programs* ..... *David Couch*  
*Associate VP Corporate Programs* ..... *Kim Williams*  
*Deputy Program Director METRO Solutions* ..... *Kevin Cronin*  
*Director of Community Outreach* ..... *Karen Marshall*  
*Project Director, Planning, Engineering & Construction* ..... *Bridgette Towns*



*A Forum participant looks at a map.*

---



*Caesar Portillo and associate from  
the Empire Cafe.*

---

## Participating Organizations



Greg Purser, Jeron Ravin and Lloyd Matzner.

- AIA Houston Urban Design Committee* ..... Camilo Parra, AIA,  
David W. Robinson, AIA
- Blueprint Houston* ..... Keiji Asakura, ASLA,  
Joe Webb, AIA
- Carnegie Vanguard High School* ..... Peggy Sue Gay,  
Rey De La Reza, FAIA
- Citizens' Transportation Coalition* ..... Robin Holzer, Adra B. Hooks
- Friends of Mandell Park* ..... Keiji Asakura, ASLA
- H-E-B* ..... Cyndy Garza, Richard Golden,  
Scott McClelland, Bill Triplett, AIA
- Houston-Galveston Area Council* ..... Jeff Taebel, FAICP
- Montrose Boulevard Conservancy* ..... Allen Ueckert, Claude Wynn
- Montrose Land Defense Coalition* ..... Maria-Elisa Heg,  
Robert Morris, RA, Christopher Patterson
- Montrose Management District* ..... Tripp Carter, Josh Hawes,  
Katie Hinkson, Kathy Hubbard, Randy Mitchmore, DDS,  
Beth Porterfield (Walter P. Moore), Claude Wynn
- Museum District Business Alliance* ..... Claude Wynn
- Renew Houston* ..... Maggie Nelson
- RichmondRail.org* ..... Dan Barnum, FAIA, Doug Childers, AIA,  
Adra B. Hooks, Kay Warhol, Joe Webb, AIA
- St. Stephen's Episcopal Church & School* ..... Sarah Becker,  
Rev. Lisa Hunt, John Siegel, Bill Wooton
- ULI-Houston* ..... Jim Kollaer, FAIA, Zane Segal



Council Member Sue Lovell speaks with a Forum participant.

## Other Participants

<i>Boulevard Oaks</i> .....	<i>Chree Boydston, Peter H. Brown, Cathy Halka, Mary Lou Henry, FAICP, Benjamin Pawlik, Joanna Reid, Laura W. Wilson</i>
<i>Houston Chronicle</i> .....	<i>David Kaplan, Mike Morris</i>
<i>Knollwood Village</i> .....	<i>Barry Mandel</i>
<i>Legacy Community Health Resources</i> .....	<i>Tim Martinez</i>
<i>MAMA</i> .....	<i>Trish Johnson, Kathryn McNiel, Andrew Minchew</i>
<i>Maryland Manor</i> .....	<i>Karen Frasier-Scott</i>
<i>Menil Collection</i> .....	<i>Emily Todd</i>
<i>Rey De La Reza Architects</i> .....	<i>Carmen Kearns</i>
<i>Rice University</i> .....	<i>Stephen Fox</i>
<i>Richmond Ave Coalition</i> .....	<i>Daphne Scarbrough</i>
<i>Second Ward Super Neighborhood</i> .....	<i>Jack Sheeks, Janice Stuff, Steven Thomson</i>
<i>Southampton</i> .....	<i>Charles Burgess, Russell Cravens, Lauren Daryani, Fiona Dawson, Rusty Etherton, Joe Fernandez</i>
<i>Southgate</i> .....	<i>Patrick Peters</i>
<i>Upper Kirby</i> .....	<i>Dean Peniche</i>
<i>Washington Terrace</i> .....	<i>Amber &amp; Doug Timmermeyer</i>
<i>Weslayan Plaza II</i> .....	<i>Margaret O'Brien-Molina</i>
<i>Westlawn Terrace</i> .....	<i>Carol Laufer, Carol Lee, Corinne Maddox</i>

---

## Acknowledgements

*AIA Houston*.....*Urban Design Committee*  
*Empire Cafe*.....*Caesar Portillo*  
*RichmondRail.org*.....*Kay Warhol*  
*Mark Johnson Photography Inc.* ..... *Mark Johnson*  
*Niko Niko's Greek & American Cafe* ..... *Dimitri Fetokakis*  
*St. Stephen's Episcopal Church*..... *Rev. Lisa Hunt*

## Neartown Officers

*President* .....*David W. Robinson*  
*Vice-President* ..... *Greg LeGrande*  
*Secretary*.....*Julie Young*  
*Treasurer* ..... *Mark Johnson*  
*Past-President* .....*Allen Ueckert*  
*Past-President & TABC Liaison*.....*Ed Gonzales*

# NEARTOWN-MONTROSE SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD: AERIAL VIEW



Aerial Photograph of Neartown, 2008