

III. Community Involvement

Community and stakeholder involvement throughout the planning process was essential in developing a plan that balanced the general desires of the community with the mobility needs of the greater region. Community involvement was divided into two public meetings and two stakeholder meetings. The first set of public and stakeholder meetings were held at the beginning of the study to better understand the mobility goals and preferences of the citizens and stakeholders. Follow up meetings were held before the finalization of recommendations to ensure the project team properly reflected ideas and concerns generated by the public and stakeholder committee alike.

Additional information for the Heights area was provided through the Greater Heights Super-Neighborhood Council. This data was incorporated into the planning process for the study area.

In addition to the in-person meeting opportunities, the study also maintained an on-line platform where all interested parties could learn about the project, download related presentation material, and provide interactive comments in a blog-like format. Additionally, the public was able to provide comments on maps and preliminary corridor cross sections. Blog comments and discussions were also used interactively by citizens and stakeholders. The website for this study is <http://heights-northside.org>.



3.1 Public Meeting #1:

Public Meeting #1 was held March 26, 2013. The purpose was to gather public insight on transportation related issues and opportunities within the study area. The meeting began with a presentation of the existing conditions as previously defined in this report. The public was then provided the opportunity to ask questions in an open forum, and discuss ideas regarding improved modal options within their community. At the close of the meeting, participants were encouraged to document concerns, and potential ideas on a series of maps printed and made available for public review. All comments were evaluated by the project team, and summarized for review and consideration at stakeholder meetings.

3.2 Stakeholder Meeting #1:

The first stakeholder meeting was held on May 15, 2013, where participants were presented findings from the existing conditions analysis. In addition, public concerns and associated solutions as expressed during Public Meeting #1 were discussed. Given the Heights and Northside communities have a significantly different stakeholder population, the issues identified by the public varied by community. As such, stakeholders were asked to evaluate provided feedback separately to ensure a proper understanding of each area's concern.



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Specifically, stakeholders were asked to provide direction to the project team regarding public input on several key issues including:

Heights:

- Heights/Yale road cross section or improvements
- Reducing truck traffic
- Bicycle lane connections
- Pedestrian/bike crossings
- Critical pedestrian connections or improvements – neighborhood study improvements

Northside:

- Bicycle and pedestrian connections to rail
- Traffic issues associated with rail
- Transit Street designations

Utilizing this information, stakeholders worked with the project team to develop “big idea” solutions that could ultimately be tested or modeled. For more information regarding modeling results, see [Chapter IV. Defining Future Mobility Conditions](#).



3.3 Stakeholder Meeting #2:

The second stakeholder meeting was held on August 19, 2013. Preliminary recommendations for road, pedestrian, bike, transit and intersection improvements were presented for review. Where appropriate, recommendations were revised to better reflect the issues raised during Public Meeting #1 and the first stakeholder meeting were being effectively considered.

A total of four big ideas, as presented during the first stakeholder meeting, were modeled and associated results presented. At the close of the meeting, scenarios 1 and 3 were deemed appropriate for further consideration. .

General consensus from Stakeholder Meeting #2 indicated that preliminary recommendations were on-par with public and stakeholder input, but several corridors required additional consideration. Stakeholders requested that local streets be evaluated as a potential multi-modal corridors, and not limit potential improvement to just Major Thoroughfares.



3.4 Public Meeting #2

Public Meeting #2 was held on April 1, 2014 at the Moody Park Community Center. The project team provided a brief summary the project team's efforts between Public Meeting #1 and Public Meeting #2. To provide a more transparent understanding of the directional changes currently ensuing within Houston's greater multi-modal conversation, changing mobility considerations were highlighted ([Chapter V. Changing Mobility Considerations](#)). The summary outlined certain adopted changes, such as the Mayor's Complete Streets Executive Order, as well as other ongoing policy considerations. Key Factors for each corridor - including transit, the pedestrian, bike, on-street parking and the vehicle - were evaluated per corridor ([Chapter VI. A Balanced Approach](#)) and within individual modal system ([Chapter VII. Outcomes](#)). Individual corridor sheets, as well as outcome boards, were displayed at the public meeting where participants were given the opportunity to provide feedback regarding recommendations.

Public Meeting #2 also provided the kickoff to a 30-day public comment period further defined below.

3.5 Public Comment Period

The close of Public Meeting #2 signified the start of a 30-day public comment period on draft recommendations resulting from this study. Handwritten comments were submitted at the close of Public Meeting #2. Other avenues for public submission included the study's official e-mail address, as well as an interactive website which provided spatial representation of final system maps. Moreover, the website maintained an interactive blog where the public was encouraged to ask questions. All questions posted were answered by staff in a timely manner. Finally, all comments received were cataloged. Responses for each comment are provided by City Staff.



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